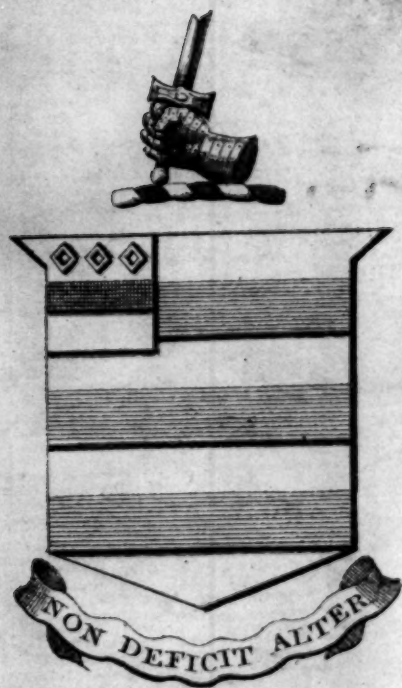
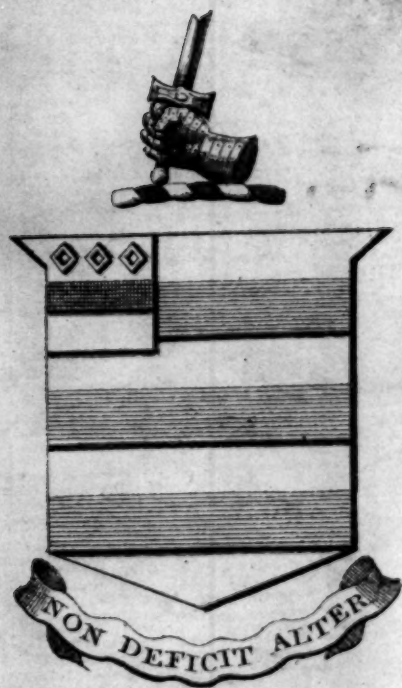
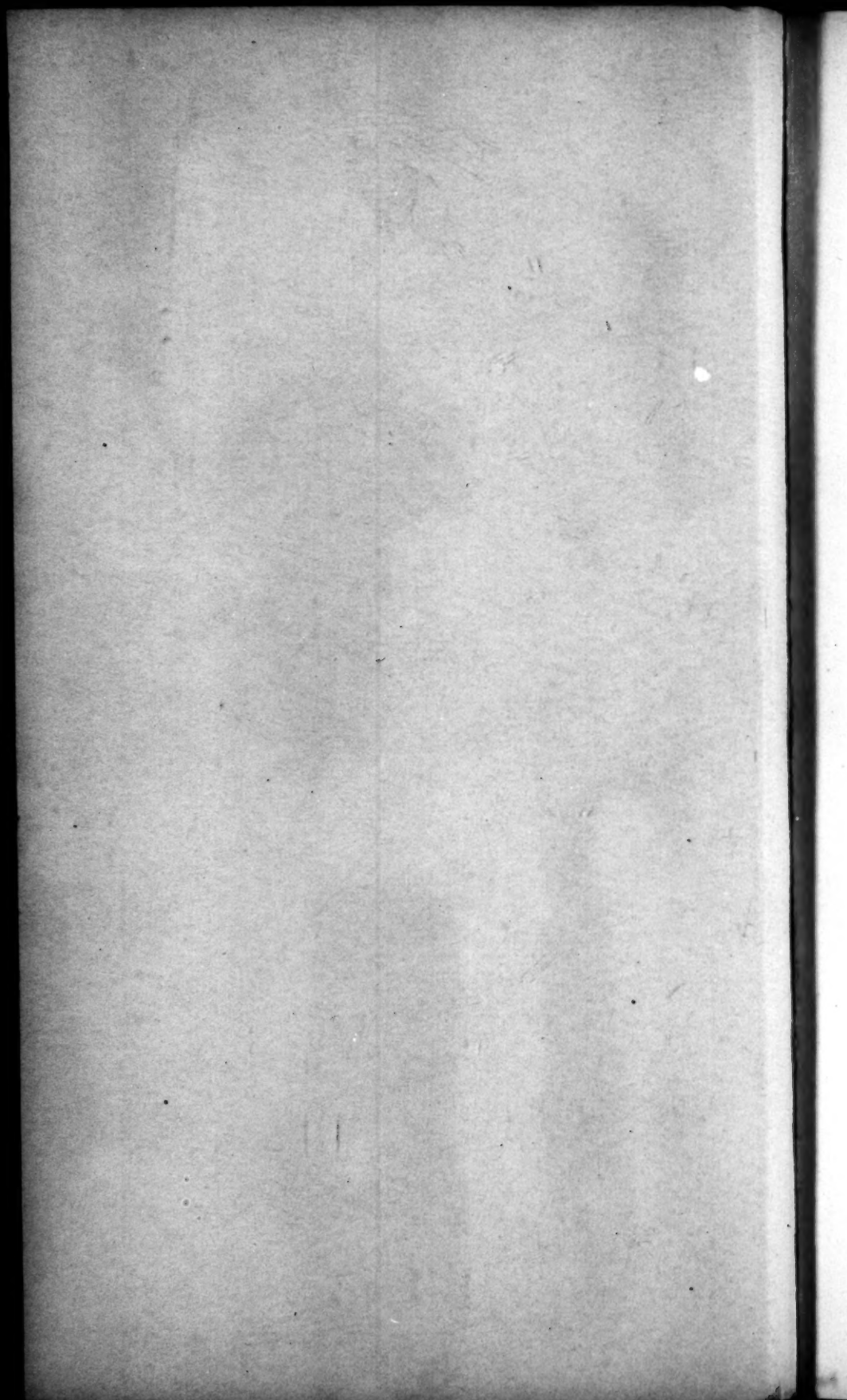




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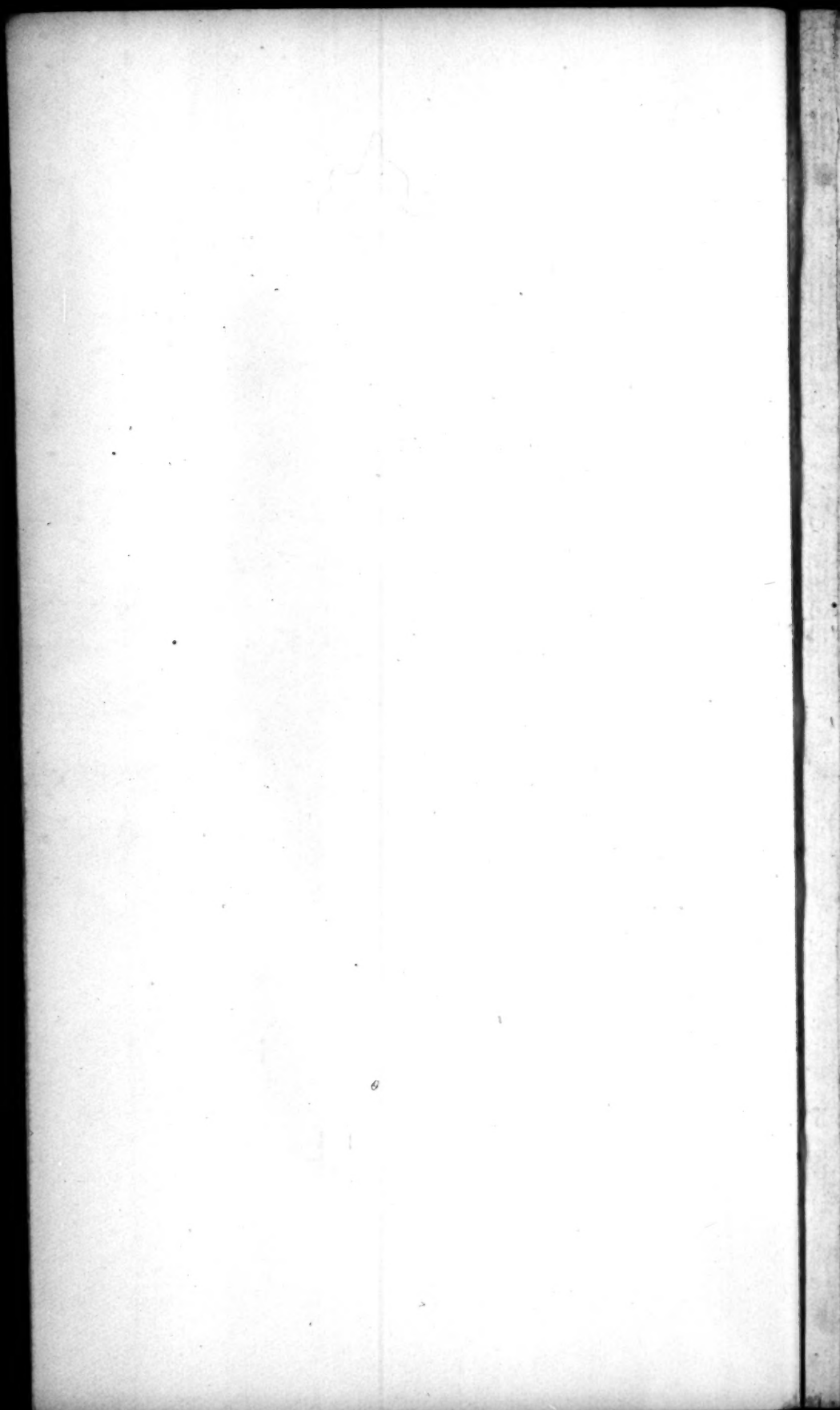


Stainforth





Nathanael Ellison.



SECRET
HISTORIES,
NOVELS, and POEMS,

Written by
Mrs. *Eliza Haywood*.

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II. The INJUR'D HUSBAND: Or, *Mistaken Resentment*. A Novel.
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THE *British* RECLUSE.



OF all the *Foibles* Youth and Inexperience is liable to fall into, there is none, I think, of more dangerous Consequence, than too easily giving Credit to what we hear: It is always the Source of a thousand Inadvertencies, and often leads the way to a numerous Train of destructive Passions. If we cou'd bring our selves to depend on nothing but what we had Proof for, what a world of Discontent shou'd we avoid! *Hope* and *Fear* wou'd then be buried in *Certainty*; and *Love* and *Resentment* never be at Enmity with *Reason*. Whereas, by relying on Appearances (and, perhaps, such too, as are form'd only by our own Wishes and Apprehensions) we, for a seeming *Good*, embrace a real *Evil*, and run into Mistakes, which, without the Interposition of a peculiar Providence, must be fatal to our Interest and Peace of Mind, in whatever Affair we suffer our Belief to be impos'd on.

LOVE! as it is one of the first Passions for which the Soul finds room, so it is also the most easily de-
B cciv'd:

2 *The BRITISH RECLUSE.*

ceiv'd: The good Opinion which it naturally inspires, of the darling Object, makes it almost an Impossibility to suspect his Honour and Sincerity; and the Pleasure which arises from a Self-assurance of the Truth of what we so eagerly desire, is too great for a young Heart, unaccustom'd to such Struggles, to repel.

But, the following little History (which I can affirm for Truth, having it from the Mouths of those chiefly concern'd in it) is a sad Example of what Miseries may attend a Woman, who has no other Foundation for Belief in what her Lover says to her, than the good Opinion her Passion made her conceive of him.

BELINDA, a young Lady of a considerable Fortune, in *Warwickshire*, being oblig'd by some Business to come to *London*, which she had never seen before, was recommended, by some of her Country Acquaintance, to a House where she might board. The Pleasantness of the Situation, and the good Company she found in it, gave her at once the Charms both of the Town and Country; but being naturally of a reserv'd Temper, and having something in her Mind which seem'd to engross her Thoughts, she grew not presently acquainted with anybody. And tho' she observ'd, that at every Meal, a Plate of whatever came to Table was carry'd away, before any other Person was help'd, yet she never had the Curiosity to ask to whom it was sent; till one Day, some Gentlemen happening to dine there, who formerly had been Boarders, they began to enquire, of the Gentlewoman of the House, how the *RECLUSE* did.---- if she continued her Solitary Course of Life,---- and, if she had yet been able to find out the Cause of her Retirement. To which the Landlady reply'd, That she was still in the same Mind, in which they left her;---- and that to discover the Mystery of her concealing herself, she believ'd an utter Impossibility. Indeed, (said one of the Gentlemen,) to *know* the Certainty of such an Affair, may be a little difficult, but I think it no hard Matter to form a very probable

The BRITISH RECLUSE. 3

bable Conjecture: In my Opinion, no Motive, but *ill requited Love*, cou'd induce a Lady (so young and beautiful, as you describe this to be) to such an obstinate and peevish Resignation of all the Pleasures of Life. I rather think (answer'd a young Lady who happen'd to be there) 'tis the Effects of Grief for the Death of some near and dear Relation; a Parent perhaps, or ---- How, Madam, (interrupted the other Gentleman hastily!) produce me but one Example, since, the Fall of *Adam*, of such a Constancy in Grief, and I shall willingly acquiesce to the Sentiments of so fine a Lady: But as I am positive you cannot, give me leave to say, it is not only impracticable, but also unnatural. Nor can I agree any more with my Friend's Notion of the Matter, than with your's: All Kinds of Passion, every Body knows, wear off with Time; and *Love*, of all others, as 'tis the gentlest, and is subsisted only by *Delight*, of course must die, when Delight is at an End. How then, can it be possible that a Woman, who has for a whole Twelvemonth liv'd in a Retirement, where she neither has seen any Body, nor been seen, if it were so that Love was the Occasion, shou'd not by this be weary both of the *Cause* and the *Effect*? No, no, (continu'd he laughing,) I rather think, my Landlady, to divert herself, and amuse us, has form'd this Story of a beautiful young Creature, whom, if the Truth were known, I dare swear is some wither'd Hag, past the Use of Pleasures, and keeps herself in private, lest her Countenance should terrify. Very well, (answer'd the good old Gentlewoman,) you may be as merry as you please with Age; but, Sir, I fancy if you cou'd have perswaded me to have contriv'd some means for you to have come to the Sight of this Hag, as you call her, she has Eyes, which wou'd have convinc'd you, that there is a Power in *Love*, beyond what now you seem to imagine of that Passion.

All Dinner, and some Time after, was past in this sort of Conversation; which, tho' *Belinda* had but a

4. *The* BRITISH RECLUSE.

small Share in, yet it fail'd not to excite her Curiosity to a Desire of knowing as much as she cou'd of this Adventure: And, as soon as the Company were gone, and she had an Opportunity of entertaining the Landlady alone, she took an Occasion to enquire what sort of Woman the RECLUSE, as they call'd her, really was, --- how long she had been there, and by what Manner introduc'd. I shall make no Scruple (said she) of informing you as far as I am able; but the Account I can give is so small, that it will only serve to encrease your Desire of knowing more: About a Year past, being told a Lady in a Chair ask'd to speak with me, I went to the Door; but not knowing her, look'd a little surpris'd, fancying she might be mistaken. I believe she guess'd what my Thoughts were; and before I had Time to disclose 'em, Madam, (said she,) I have something to communicate to you, which I am not willing any Person shou'd be witness to; and, if you are at Leisure, shou'd take it as a Favour if you wou'd give me an Opportunity of discoursing you. I then immediately desir'd her to come into the Parlor; and the Door being shut, I am, (resum'd she,) an utter Stranger to you, and, indeed, design to continue so to all the World: It was but by an Accident I heard of the Accommodation you have for Boarders; and gladly wou'd become one, if you approve of it on the Conditions I shall propose. They must be very strange ones (answer'd I) that cou'd make me refuse the Company of a Lady, such as you appear to be: There are too many Charms in that Countenance, not to give me an Ambition of a nearer Acquaintance: I beg therefore, that you will put me out of the Pain of believing there is a Possibility that any Thing cou'd oblige me to deny my self that Honour. She return'd this little Compliment only with a Bow, but which had something in it of more graceful and obliging than any Words cou'd be: And after a Pause, The Conditions I mean (said she) are only these; *First*, That you never will endeavour to know more
of

The BRITISH RECLUSE. 5

of me, than I am willing to reveal;---- That you will suffer no one to enter the Apartment order'd for me, but the Servant who shall bring me in my Meat, (for I will never dine at Table,) and give that Attendance which is necessary. And *Lastly*, That you will be satisfy'd to accept of a Quarter's Payment, of whatever we shall agree on, always beforehand, for your Security, in taking a Person so altogether unknown to you into your House. I will give you (continu'd she, perceiving I look'd amaz'd) Time to consider on what I have said, and, in a Day or two, will wait on you for an Answer. As she spoke these Words, she went hastily into the Chair, leaving me in as great a Consternation at her Behaviour, as ever I remember myself to have been in at any Thing in my whole Life. *Belinda* cou'd not here forbear interrupting her, by asking a thousand Questions as to her Dress, her Beauty, and whether she observ'd any Thing of that Melancholy in her Countenance the first Time, which she had since discover'd. To all which the Landlady reply'd, That the Surprise she was in at that Time, hinder'd her from taking much Notice, either of her Garb, or Person; but that, since her being in the House, she was always dress'd rich, but extremely careless, and wou'd often go with only her Hair and a Night-gown for many Days together. But in spite (said she) of the little Care she seems to take of herself, Heaven never form'd a Creature more exactly lovely; nor do I think it possible for the nicest Eye to discover the least Defect, either in her Face or Shape. What is she (resum'd *Belinda*) as to her Wit and Conversation? I have already told you (answer'd the other) that she refuses to let us know her Perfections that way, by never stirring from her Apartment, nor permitting any of us to come into it; but if we may form a Judgment of her Genius, by the Entertainment which alone she seems to take Delight in, that of reading the best Authors, we must believe it to be very Elegant: She has an admirable Collection of Books; and my Maid, who waits on

6 *The* BRITISH RECLUSE.

her, tells me, she never goes in, without finding her engag'd in some one of them. Then you ventur'd (said *Belinda*) to take her, without any further Knowledge? I consider'd (reply'd she) that there cou'd be no great Hazard in it; and, besides, there was something so inexpressibly engaging in her Mein and Manner of Address, that I believe it almost an Impossibility she should be refus'd any Thing. This Account gave *Belinda* the greatest Desire imaginable to be acquainted with her, and never left soliciting the *Land-lady* to use her Interest to procure it. The old Gentlewoman, who was extremely good-humour'd, promis'd to do her Endeavour; but said withal, That she was afraid it was a Work she should not be able to accomplish. You must tell her, (said *Belinda*,) and, perhaps, with more Truth than you imagine, that you have a Person in your House, who justly may be term'd one of the most unfortunate on Earth; ---- that I am charm'd with her Manner of Life; ---- that I could like nothing so much as to partake such a Retirement; ---- and, that if she wou'd permit me, sometimes, to mingle my Tears with hers, I wou'd be satisfy'd with the Opportunity of indulging my Grief, without any farther Intrusion on her Secrets, than she shall give leave. This, (answer'd the *Land-lady*,) if any Thing, will do. ---- And as you have so ingeniously contriv'd the Plot, it must be entirely owing to my Want of Ability in carrying it on, if it shou'd miscarry: And (continu'd she) I go about it with the more Courage, because that reserv'd, and, indeed, too grave Look (for so young and fine a Lady) which you always wear, will, if she consents to see you, give some Credit to my Words. You need not, indeed, (resum'd *Belinda*, with a deep Sigh,) be under any Apprehensions, that my Behaviour will be in the least contradictory to whatever you shall tell her of my Disposition to indulge a Melancholy, which I have but too much Reason for. You may talk after what manner you please, (said the other,) but I am too well acquainted with your Circumstances,

The BRITISH RECLUSE. 7

stances, not to know that you can have no *real* Causes for that Pensiveness, which, to deal freely with you, very much obscures the Lustre of your Charms. I know not, indeed, (continu'd she, with a Smile,) what *imaginary* ones your Fancy may suggest: Young People, too often, take Pleasure, as it were, in finding out something to afflict themselves with:--- I am afraid you have seen some Gentleman too lovely for your Repose; and, perhaps, he may be (for Love is a blind Deity) of a *Quality above your Hopes*, or of a *Degree below your Discretion*, to make Choice of;--- or, 'tis possible, may have prov'd ungrateful;--- or, may be already married,--- or engag'd,--- or else--- She wou'd, doubtless, have run on with all the Circumstances that can make a young Woman in Love unhappy, if *Belinda* (a little too nearly touch'd, putting on a more than ordinary Severity in her Countenance) had not interrupted her, by saying, Madam, whatever the Occasion of my Melancholy may be, I am so much of the RECLUSE's Mind, as to resolve to keep it secret. Pardon me, (resum'd the Landlady, perceiving she was nettled,) my Words were meant no otherwise than to divert; and to make what Reparation I can for the Inadvertency of them, will confess, that if a Person of *your Age* is too apt to seek Occasions of tormenting herself, one of *mine* is liable to as great a Fault, that of talking too much of Affairs which are not any way her Business. Some Company happening to come in, broke off the Conversation. *Belinda* retir'd to her Chamber; and the Landlady remain'd with her Head full of Contrivance, by what means she shou'd bring about the Performance of her Promise.

The next Day an Opportunity offer'd very lucky for her Purpose: The RECLUSE sent for her to pay her some Money; and as soon as that Affair was dispatch'd, she began to labour the Success of the other, and was so fortunate in her Negotiation, that as much averse as she found the RECLUSE at first, the Assurances she gave her that *Belinda's* Desire of her

8 *The BRITISH RECLUSE.*

Society sprung only from a Belief that there was a Sympathy in their Afflictions, at last prevail'd on her to receive a Visit from her. Having obtain'd this Grant, the good old Gentlewoman, eager to acquit herself of the Promise she had made, entreated that *Belinda* might have leave to wait on her that Night; to which the RECLUSE, having permitted her coming at all, easily consented.

The Meeting of these two Ladies was something particular for Persons of the same Sex; each found, at first Sight, so much to admire in the other, that it kept both from speaking for some Moments. The RECLUSE consider'd *Belinda*, as indeed she is, one of the most lovely Persons on Earth; and *Belinda* found the RECLUSE so far beyond the *Landlady's* Description, something so majestick, and withal so sweet and attractive in her Air,----such a Mixture of the most forceful Fire, and most enchanting Softness in her Eyes, that she became wholly lost in speechless Wonder; till the RECLUSE (who, tho' as young as *Belinda*, was Mistress of a much greater Presence of Mind) broke Silence in these Words:

If, Madam, (said she, with a Voice and Accent no less charming than her Person,) you are enough in love with Misery, to wish to be Partaker of it with me, I heartily can bid you welcome to this Scene of Woe: But if your Grievs are of a Nature that will admit Relief, the Society of a Wretch like me, will be far from adding to your Consolation. To forget the Misfortunes I lament, (reply'd *Belinda*,) wou'd be, perhaps, a greater Ill than any I yet have known.---- 'Tis my Desire always to remember them; and nothing sure can so well enable me to do it with Patience, as the Knowledge that so many excellent Qualities, as you appear to be Mistress of, cannot be exempted from Calamities. Alas! (resum'd the RECLUSE, bursting into Tears,) 'tis the little Knowledge you have of me inclines you to so favourable an Opinion. Believe me, Madam, (contin'd she, weeping still more,) were you acquainted with the History of
of

The BRITISH RECLUSE. 9

of this Wretch, you see before you, you wou'd allow; that as none like me has ever *suffer'd*, so also none ever has like me *deserv'd* to suffer. I believe, Madam, (answer'd *Belinda*,) one of the greatest Impossibilities you can attempt, is, that of persuading me, or, indeed, any Body that sees you, to that Opinion. These little Civilities being over, they fell into a Conversation suitable to that Melancholy their Misfortunes had involv'd them in; and they agreed so perfectly in their Sentiments concerning the Instability of all human Happiness,---- the little Confidence there was to be put in the Protestations of Friendship,----and that the only way to attain true Content, was in an absolute Retirement from the World, and a Disregard of every Thing in it; that when they parted, (as *Belinda* thought it improper, to make her first Visit very long,) it was with a mutual Satisfaction, and each began to conceive for the other a real Tenderness, which has ever since remain'd unshaken.

The next Day (being desir'd to do so by the RECLUSE) *Belinda* made her a second Visit; and after some Discourse like what had pass'd the Evening before, the Conversation turn'd, perhaps, undesignedly by either of them on *Love*; but when once enter'd, neither seem'd to grow weary of the Subject; and both spoke in so feeling a Manner, that if a third Person had been witness of what they said, he need not have been very quick of Apprehension to discover what was the Source of both these Ladies Troubles. They sat together till past Midnight; and when *Belinda* took her Leave, it was not without making an Appointment to pass the next Evening as they had done this.

As soon as *Belinda* was alone, she began to run over in her Mind, all the Particulars of the Conversation she had with the RECLUSE, and was now confirm'd in what she before imagin'd, that *Love* had been the sole Cause of her Retirement: She wou'd have given almost one of her Eyes, to have been let

10 *The BRITISH RECLUSE.*

into the Secret of the whole Affair; but durst not attempt to ask it, for fear of disobliging her, if the RECLUSE, who was little behind her in Curiosity, had not, at the next Visit, purposely given her an Opportunity.

I know not, Madam, (said she, soon after they were together,) whether there be a Possibility for you to imagine from what Cause the Miseries you see me in have proceeded, but I am half positive, that I can more than guess the Origine of that Melancholy which induces you to support the Society of a Wretch like me.---I cannot doubt, Madam, (reply'd *Belinda*, blushing, yet pleas'd she had so favourable an Opportunity of speaking her Mind without Offence,) your Penetration in a much greater Matter, since I, who have but little Discernment, and less Experience, have been bold enough in my Imagination, to assure myself that whatever the *Effects* may be, the *Cause* of both our Sorrows is the same. I am so much of your Mind, (resum'd the other,) that I am willing to put it to the Tryal. Here (continu'd she, taking Pens and Paper) do you write, and I will do the same; and by reading what each other have set down, both will avoid the Confusion of speaking first. Agreed, (said *Belinda*, and immediately did as the RECLUSE desir'd.) On Exchange of the Papers, *Belinda* read in that which the RECLUSE had writ, *Undone by Love, and the Ingratitude of faithless Man*. And the RECLUSE found in that which the other had writ, these Words, *For ever lost to Peace by LOVE, and my own fond Belief*. As I expected! cry'd they out both together. And after a little Pause, Not all the Ills (rejoyn'd the RECLUSE) which Fortune watches to oppress us with, are half so ruinous, so destructive, as this one Passion! Nothing, indeed, (reply'd *Belinda*, weeping,) is to our Sex so fatal. O Love! (continued she,) thou gilded Poison, which kills by slow Degrees, and makes each Moment of our Life a Death! Why, O why, do we suffer our fond Hearts to harbour thee?---Why are we not like

The BRITISH RECLUSE. II

like Man, (resum'd the RECLUSE, bearing her Company in Tears,) inconstant, changing, and hunting after Pleasure in every Shape?--- Or, if our Sex, more pure, and more refin'd, disdains a Happiness so gross, why have we not Strength of Reason too, to enable us to *scorn* what is no longer *worthy* our *Esteem*? In these, and the like Exclamations, they pass some Time; and had, doubtless, given a greater Loose to the over-boiling Passions of their Souls, if their mutual Curiosity to know each others Adventures, had not oblig'd them to leave off.

The RECLUSE wou'd fain have perswaded *Belinda* to relate her Story first; but that Lady excus'd herself, in Terms so obliging, and full of Respect, that the other cou'd not press her any farther, and only said, I shou'd hardly be prevail'd on to a Recital of those Misfortunes which, indeed, have fallen on me but too justly, till by knowing yours I shou'd have Hope to find Excuse; but, as I am confident no Woes were ever like mine, I have good Nature enough to acquaint you with 'em first, to the End that the Knowledge of mine may make your own seem less, and enable you with more Ease to the Relation of them. *Belinda* answer'd her only with a Bow, and a little shaking of her Head, at once to thank her for her Civility, and shew that she thought it impossible for any Affliction to exceed that which she endur'd: And the RECLUSE, after having paid a Tribute of Sighs, which the Remembrance of her Misfortunes always exacted from her, began to satisfy her Companion's Impatience in these Words:

The Story of CLEOMIRA.

TO make you perfectly comprehend the Truth of my Affairs, (said she,) I must acquaint you of what Condition my *Parents* were: Though their Names I shall beg leave to conceal, least by declaring to any one that so deservedly unhappy a Creature is their Child, I shou'd disturb the sacred Quiet of their Ashes.

She

12 *The BRITISH RECLUSE.*

She cou'd not speak this without bursting into a Torrent of Tears, which, for some Moments, hinder'd her from proceeding: But as soon as she had a little repell'd the Violence of her Grief, You must know (continu'd she) that my Father was a younger Branch of a Family which boasts a Place among the Prime of the *Nobility*; and my Mother was descended from Ancestors whose noble Actions merited Titles, though they wore none, but that of being the Best and most Ancient of the Gentry. They had both been from their Infancy accusom'd to a Court, and had Spirits far above their Circumstances, which made them unable to endure the Thoughts either of a Retirement, or appearing in Publick with an Equipage any way inferior to what those of the same Rank maintain'd. Thus was I, who was their only Child, bred up in all the Pomp and Pride of Quality; and great Part of what shou'd have been reserv'd for my Fortune, spent in my Education, and lavish'd on those unnecessary Ornaments and Expences, which all young Girls, who are fond of making a Shew, affect. I was not much above Thirteen when my Father died: His Loss was so real a Grief to my Mother, that for a long Time she remain'd inconsolable, nor did her former Gaiety ever return. Instead of entertaining any Thoughts of a second Marriage, she transplanted all the Tenderness she had born my Father on me; and the Consideration how improbable it was for her to match me according to my Birth, or the Expectations I had been bred to, (my Father being able to leave me no more than three thousand Pounds,) every Day encreas'd her Affliction: Nor were these Reflections unaccompanied with Fears, that my Youth, and some Attractions which her Love made her fancy she saw about me, might draw on Temptations to the Disadvantage of my Reputation; she therefore resolv'd on the sudden to quit the Court, as a Place too dangerous for a young Woman to continue in, who had not a Fortune sufficient to entitle
her

her to the honourable Affections of the *Great*, and too much Pride to listen to the Solicitations of the *inferior* Sort who frequented it. That the less Notice might be taken of the Change of her Humour, she pretended an Indisposition, and that the *London* Air did not agree with her; and in a short Time took a House about six Miles distant from it. This was like present Death to me: But all I cou'd say was of no Effect; the more pressing I appear'd to *stay*, the more she thought it needful I shou'd *go*; and the passionate Fondness I express'd for the Town Diversions, and Disdain of a Country Life, confirm'd her, that it was absolutely necessary at once to prevent the Dangers she imagin'd threaten'd me, and repel the Growth of that Ambition which she found had already taken too deep a Root in my youthful Heart. In fine, we went: And this so sudden and disagreeable an Alteration in my Manner of Living, gave me a Shock which I know not how to express. My Mother, entirely throwing off the *fine Lady*, began to practise the meer *Country Gentlewoman*, and us'd her utmost Endeavour to make me do so too. She was continually telling me, that my Fortune, join'd with all she cou'd be able to do for me, cou'd entitle me to no greater Hopes.—That it was time for me to learn to play the good Housewife, and forget that there ever were such Things as Balls, Plays, Masquerades, or Assemblies. All this, which was really the Effect of her *Prudence*, I look'd upon as *Whimsy*; and the Restraint she laid me under, of not visiting, or being visited by any Persons, whom she cou'd have the least Apprehension of, I consider'd as an Affront to my Understanding. I am oblig'd (said she, my dear *Belinda*) to enter into these Particulars, because this sudden Change from all the Liberties in the World, to the most strict Confinement, is all the Excuse I can make for my ill Conduct.—But why (continu'd she, after a Pause) shou'd I alledge that for my Vindication, which Time, perhaps, and Consideration, might have made easy to me, if a more fatal Enemy

14 *The BRITISH RECLUSE.*

to my *Repose*, as well as my *Interest*, my *Honour*, and my *Virtue*, had not made it more hateful to me. Here was her Speech, a second Time, interrupted by her tempestuous Grief; and *Belinda* was forc'd to make Use of all the Arguments she was Mistress of, to perswade her to Moderation.

At last, getting leave to resume her Discourse, One Day, (said she,) one fatal Day, --- wou'd to God it had been the last of my *Life*, as it was of my *Repose*, two Ladies came to visit my Mother; and speaking of a magnificent Ball that Night at Court, told her they were come on Purpose to entreat her to permit me to accompany them. By the Account I have given, you may judge how little Probability there was she shou'd consent; but whether she was really overcome by their *Reasons*, or only yielded to their *Perswasions*, being Persons she very much esteem'd, I know not; but when I least expected it, she order'd me to make myself ready to wait on them. Never was any Prisoner, who long had languish'd in a Dungeon, more rejoic'd to see the open Air, than I to find myself once more in Court, where every body welcom'd me, every body carress'd me, and, indeed, I believe, some of them with a good deal of Sincerity: For not being of a Quality great enough to create *Envy*, nor so mean as to beget *Contempt*, and tolerably well humour'd, I am sensible there were many whose kind Wishes I heartily possess'd. I had my Admirers too; at least, there were several young Sparks, and those not of the lowest Rank, who took Pleasure in making me believe so. Not that my Heart was any way affected with what they said, though I had Vanity enough to encourage it: *Love* was a Passion I had so little Notion of, that I consider'd it no more than as a Fiction, and only dress'd up by the Poets in such Variety of Shapes, to make the Amusement more entertaining. But this, alas! was the unlucky Hour in which I was to be convinc'd of the real Being of that Power I so slightly had regarded; and soon learn'd to pity, by my *own*,
those

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those Pains which, with an unregarding Ear, I often had heard *others* mourn.

About the Middle of the Ball, as I was dancing with a young Nobleman, who had done me the Honour to take me out, I saw, on a sudden, the Eyes of the whole Company turn'd towards the Door; but, being too busily engag'd in what I was about, had not Time to consider what the Meaning might be, till having ended my Dance, and it being my Turn to take a Partner, a Lady of my Acquaintance whisper'd me, and said, There's the fine young Lord.--- (I will not call him by any other Name than that of *Lysander*.) He is lately (continued my Friend) come from his Travels, and but this Moment enter'd; it will be an envy'd Gallantry, if you lead him out. While she was speaking, I directed my Eyes where I perceiv'd she look'd, and saw a Form which appear'd more than *Man*, and nothing inferior to those Idea's we conceive of *Angels*: His Air! his Shape! his Face! were more than human!--- Miriads of light'ning Glories darted from his Eyes, as he cast them round the Room, yet temper'd with such a streaming Sweetness, such a descending Softness, as seem'd to *entreat* the Admiration he *commanded*! A thousand Times have I attempted since to *speak* what 'twas I *felt* at this first fatal Interview; but *Words* cou'd never do Justice to the Wonders of his *Charms*, or half describe the *Effect* they wrought on me: Oh! had his *Soul* been worthy of that lovely, that transporting *Outside*, I shou'd have been too blest, been *happy* to as superlative a Degrée, as now I am *curs'd* and wretched. But not to tire you with unavailing *Wishes*, or as fruitless *Exclamations*, I Lov'd!--- was plung'd in a Wild Sea of Passion, before I had Time to *know*, or stem the Danger! I had so many disorder'd Motions in my *Heart*, that I am amaz'd my *Feet* kept any just Measure with the Musick; or that, so little us'd as I had ever been to disguise my Thoughts, my *Eyes* did not betray the Confusion of my *Soul*, and make visible to the whole Company what

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what I was not yet acquainted with myself: But whether the great Concourse of much finer Ladies who were there, hinder'd me from being much regarded, or those Changes which, I am very sure, appear'd in my Countenance, were only taken for the Effects of Bashfulness in dancing with a Person who was altogether a Stranger, I cannot tell; but I scap'd that Raillery, which I must have expected to have met with, if any Body had been sensible of the true State of my Condition. When I had done Dancing, I mingled with those Ladies who came with me, and some others of my Acquaintance: *Lyander* soon join'd us, and enter'd into a Conversation, which shew'd his Wit was, if possible, superior to his Beauty: He was perfectly well bred, obliging and gallant, and had something of I know not what peculiarly graceful and enchanting in his Voice and Manner of Address; and what added to his other Engagements, at least *endear'd* 'em to my (already doating) Heart, was, that though he said nothing in particular to me at that Time, yet I cou'd easily discern he aim'd at pleasing only me. But he behav'd himself not in so general a Manner the whole Night: A little after, perceiving I was separated a good Distance from the Persons I had been with, he came up to me, and making a low Bow, Madam, (said he,) how fortunate am I, who after having been in many Courts, where I have seen Ladies who justly may be call'd Beautiful, and since my Return home have met with nothing that cou'd bring me into good Humour with my Native Country, have *now* the Blessing of beholding a Face, which not only sums up all the different Lovelinesses of *other* Charmers, but has also an immensely Divine Treasure of *its own*! --- *Others* may move the Heart by slow Degrees, and with some one Perfection captivate the *Sense*; but *you* have Graces which strike the very *Soul*, and at first Sight subdue each Faculty! Blush not, fair Excellence! (continued he, finding I was silent, as indeed I had no Power to speak,) I tell you
but

but the Sense of all Mankind, --- but what Millions of Tongues are full of, and what your happy Glass, as often as you look in it, informs you. If, my Lord, (reply'd I, recollecting myself as well as I was able,) there were a Possibility of being unacquainted with my own Defects, so good-natur'd a Compliment might give me Graces which before I wanted: But as I have the Misfortune of knowing myself but too well, all the Advantage I can gain by it, is the Honour of being in the Company of a Person whose Wit can find something to praise in those the least Praise-worthy. O most Angelick, (resum'd he, tenderly pressing my unresisting Hand,) most Adorable of your Sex! rob not the brightest Temple of the Deity, your Divine Self, of your just Due. --- If (but that's impossible) you can distrust the Force of your too potent Charms, the Effects they have on me will quickly tell you what they are: --- Could those inspiring Eyes but look into my Soul, they wou'd perceive their Power. --- Pardon this Declaration: A vulgar Passion, and for a vulgar Object, may wait on the dull Formalities of *Decorum*; but what I feel for you, bursts out and blazes too fierce to be conceal'd. --- It is not to be express'd, --- it is not to be imagin'd, how he look'd while he was speaking these Words, and much less in what Manner I behav'd at hearing them: Surprise, and Joy, and Hope, and Fear, and Shame, at once assaulted me, and hurried my wild Spirits with such Vehemence, that had I answer'd at all, it must have been something strangely incoherent; but, happily for me, some Company came that Instant to the Place where we were standing, and deliver'd me from the greatest Perplexity I cou'd be in. I did not, however, recover myself the whole Time of my being there; yet, so much was I infatuated, so lost to all Thought of Reason or Discretion, that whenever he approach'd me, I had not Courage to avoid him, as I might easily have done, without being taken Notice of. 'Tis sure, he took all Opportunities of entertaining me

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in the Manner he had begun, and without doubt, as he has since own'd to me, he saw enough in my Eyes to make him know the Pleasure I took in hearing him speak, far exceeded my Confusion at what he said.

It was almost Morning when the Ball broke up; and there being no Possibility of my going home till next Day, I pass'd that Time at the Lady's House who brought me out: But, though the Fatigue and Hurry of the Night wou'd at another Season have made me glad of Rest, I had *now* enough to keep me waking: *Lyfander's* Charms, his Beauty, his Wit, the Declaration he had made me, and the Manner in which I had receiv'd it, gave me sufficient Matter of Reflection: I cou'd not think I had listen'd to any Protestations of *Love*, from a Man I had never seen before, without an inexpressible Shock to my Modesty; but these Considerations soon gave Place to others even more destructive to my Peace: *Lyfander* was too lovely, and appear'd too deserving, for me to repent, for any long Time, the Complaisance I had shew'd him; and my greatest Trouble was the Fear that I shou'd never see him more. I resolv'd to say nothing to my Mother of what had pass'd, believing, with Reason enough, that she wou'd not only condemn me for Mismanagement, but also take such Measures as shou'd for ever deprive me of the Sight of him: *Love* taught me a Cunning which before I was a Stranger to; and though I burn'd with Desire to be talking something of my ador'd *Lyfander*, and vent some Part of the Overflowings of my ravish'd Soul, yet I so well dissembled, that at my Return home I never mention'd the least Syllable which cou'd give Suspicion; and* contented myself, as well as I was able, with the Belief that *Lyfander* (who, I found by his calling me by my Name, had enquired who I was) wou'd find some Means to send to me. Nor did that Hope deceive me: The very next Day, happening to be at a Window, I perceiv'd a Fellow walking backwards and forwards

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wards before our House: It presently came into my Head, that there was a Probability he might be a Messenger from *Lyfander*. I observ'd his Motions a good while, and finding he still lurk'd about, with his Eyes continually fix'd on our Door, I made a Pretence to go down; and standing there a little, the Man drew nearer, but with a Circumspection which confirm'd me my Conjectures were true. No body being within hearing, I call'd to him, and ask'd him if he wanted any thing. Madam, (answer'd he softly, and pulling a Letter out of his Pocket,) by the Description which was given me, I believe *this* is design'd to you. It is, it is, (cry'd I, as soon as I saw the Superfcription,) and immediately ran in, too much transport'd to say any more. I got into an Arbor in the Garden, to peruse the dear Contents, which I very well remember, and are too deeply engraven in my Mind, ever to be forgotten.

To the Divine CLEOMIRA.

IF the most adorable Cleomira wanted any Proof of the Dominion of her Charms, besides the just Title they have to reign over the Souls of all Mankind, this had come to convince her of a Truth, which Yesterday she seem'd so cruelly to doubt. But you are too Divine to be ignorant of your Attributes; and, if there is any Thing in you, which is not of a Piece with Heaven, it is that you are not sufficiently stor'd with Mercy to look favourably on a Man who has no other Merit than his Zeal. It is with an inconceivable Terror I look back on that Declaration, which the Force of the most violent Passion that ever was, oblig'd me to make, in so unpollite and unprepar'd a Manner; and tremble when I consider how much Reason you have to condemn the Presumption of this. But, if as many Years of humble faithful Services as Fate has allotted for my Life, may purchase a Pardon for the Sin of my Temerity, I devote
themselves

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them entirely to you:--- Henceforth rule my every Word and Action,--- I had almost said my every Wish: But, Ob! that is not in your Power, vast as it is! for shou'd you command me to cease burning with impatient Desires to obtain the Blessing of pleasing you, I freely own, I cou'd not,--- nay, I wou'd not, in that, obey you: --- In spite, even of yourself I must for ever Love,--- for ever Worship you!-- Permit me then to owe to your Bounty, what else my own Obstinacy will give me, the Title of, the

Most excellent Cleomira's

Truest and Everlasting Votary,

LYSANDER.

There was a *Postscript*, (continu'd the RECLUSE,) in which he press'd very strenuously for an Answer; the Words of which I do not very well remember: And, indeed, 'tis needless to have troubled you with this, or many others of the like Nature; but as there are some of his Letters, which, in the Course of my Story, I shall be oblig'd to repeat, I thought it proper to let you see the mighty Difference 'twixt *Hoping* and *Possessing*; to what an elevated Height the Wings of Fancy soar, while in Pursuit; and how low, how faint, and drooping is their Flight, when there is nothing further to be obtain'd. I will not pretend to tell you what my Transports were while I was reading; if, as you confess, you really know the Power of Love, *your own Heart* will make you comprehend what 'twas *mine* felt, much more than any Words cou'd do. I was almost distracted for fear the Messenger shou'd be gone, and I have no Opportunity to send an Answer: But he was better instructed by his Master; and when I open'd the Door, he presently started out from behind a great Tree that grew before the House. I made a Sign to him that he shou'd stay, and went to my Chamber to write: I durst not allow Time for
Thought,

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Thought, lest any Interruption shou'd happen; and only following the Dictates of my inconsiderate and transported Passion, return'd an Answer in these Words:

To the Noble L Y S A N D E R.

*I*F Cleomira were half so worthy Adoration as Lysander truly is, she might, without any Difficulty, be brought to believe all you say to her: But, as I am sensible I have no other Graces than those your Fancy is pleas'd to bestow on me, you cannot blame me, if I am a little diffident of the Continuance of a Passion so weakly grounded.--- I shall not, however, desire you to desist giving me any farther Testimonies of it; because, as you say, while you are possess'd of it, Entreaties of that kind wou'd be altogether unavailing. I think myself extremely oblig'd to you for the Caution with which your Letter was deliver'd; and if you favour me with any more, hope you will make use of the same, which will be of the greatest Consequence to the Peace of

CLEOMIRA.

Notwithstanding the Violence of my Passion, there were some Intervals in which I endur'd severe Upbraidings from my Modesty, for engaging thus precipitately in a Love-Affair; but they lasted not long, and at every Return grew weaker than before: Lysander's Idea wou'd suffer nothing but itself to have any Prevalence in my Soul; and the Glory, methought, of appearing amiable in his Eyes, was more Happiness than all the World besides cou'd give.

The next Morning, almost the first Person I saw, was the Messenger again, walking as he had done the Day before: I made no doubt but he had another *Billet* for me, and the first Moment I had an Opportunity, went down to receive it. I was not deceiv'd;
for

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for as soon as I had open'd the Door, he slipp'd a Paper into my Hand, and retir'd to his Covert quick as Lightning. The Words of this were;

To my Ador'd CLEOMIRA.

HOW much was I mistaken while I believ'd it impossible there was a Charm more touching than your Wit and Beauty: Your Goodness ravishes beyond both!--- The Brightness of your Eyes inflame the Heart; --- the Harmony of your Voice enchants the Ear; --- but this divine Sweetness of your Nature diffuses Heaven, and gives Raptures which Angels only, and the happier Man whom Cleomira favours, can be blest'd with!--- Say, with what Words, thou wond'rous Abstract of Perfection! thou loveliest, --- wisest, --- best of all created Beings! shall I repay a Condescension so unhop'd, --- unmerited! To be permitted to adore you, is Exstasy too great to bear in Silence! --- O give my impetuous Transports leave to vent themselves! --- let me beneath your Feet declare the mighty Sense I have of so unvalued an Obligation! --- let, on that happy Earth you tread on, my humble Body avow the lower Prostration of my devoted Soul, and never rise, till by some Arguments forcible as my Passion, I have convinc'd you with how much Truth, Purity, and everlasting Zeal, I am your Slave! I have not been so sparing of my Enquiries, as not to know it will be almost impossible to obtain the Blessing I entreat at your House; but if you can think of any other, where with Convenience I may be favour'd, let the same unequal'd Excellence of Disposition, which has already done such Miracles for me, incline you to let me know it by the Bearer: As also if you will feast my longing Eyes with a transient View from your Window, as I pass by to Morrow-Morning on Horseback. Tho' your Idea has never been absent from my Soul, since the first Moment I beheld you, yet my impatient Sense reproaches me that I have liv'd these two long Days, without endeavouring at least a greater Proportion of Feli-

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Felicity, and testifying by all the Ways I am able, how much I am the never-too-much deify'd Cleomira's

Eternally Devoted

and most Passionate

LYSANDER.

Any Body but *me*, wou'd have been too much alarm'd at the reading these Lines, to have return'd any Answer, unless it were such a one as shou'd have entirely taken away those Hopes my former Complaisance had inspir'd. The Boldness of desiring me to appoint a Meeting was so great, as all the fine Things he said to me cou'd not atone for; and was sufficient to have taught me, how dangerous it was to make any Condescensions of this kind to a Man I had so little Knowledge of: To *another*, I say, this might have been a timely Warning; but, alas! I was so blinded with my Passion, that I cou'd think of nothing but which way I should gratify it; and without any Struggles from that Bashfulness which till now had never forsook me, writ him a Reply in this Manner:

To the Worthy LYSANDER.

THE Gratitude you express for that, perhaps, too great Compliance you have found in me, is infinitely obliging: For I wou'd much rather you shou'd impute it to any thing, than to that Vanity, which too often influences a Woman of my Age, to encourage Addresses her Heart is no way affected with; and, tho' it may appear too free a Declaration, I am so little acquainted with disguising the Truth, that I cannot forbear telling you, it is to your Merits alone you are indebted for the Liberty of a Correspondence, which you are pleas'd to think agreeable. Your Information, that it is impossible
for

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for me to receive the Honour you wou'd do me at our House, has not deceiv'd you; and I must also let you know I am too strictly confin'd to promise it at any other. I must therefore leave it entirely to Fortune, to procure me any farther Pleasure in your Conversation than what your Letters afford: But, in the mean time, shall not fail being at the Window that overlooks the Road, in the Hope of seeing a Person, whose Regard shall always be most valuable to

CLEOMIRA.

When I had sent this away, I feign'd myself a little indispos'd, to avoid the Necessity of Talking; for Speech was now become a Pain, since I durst not employ it in the Praise of my adored *Lysander*. I pass'd the whole Day, and good Part of the Night, in contemplating the Happiness I shou'd enjoy next Morning; and it cou'd be call'd scarce Dawn when I got up, and took my Post at the appointed Window, whence I believe it wou'd have been impossible for any Thing to have remov'd me. My Mother was no sooner out of Bed than she enquir'd after my Health; her Tendernefs making her doubt the Disorder I complain'd of was increas'd, because I had not been in her Chamber, as it was my Custom every Morning, to entreat her Blessing: And being told where I was, came in to me, not a little surpris'd to find me in a Room, which, by reason of the great Dust of the Highway, was very seldom made use of, and the least pleasant of any in the House. She did not fail to ask the Cause of my being there; and I told her, That not being very well, I hop'd some Benefit from the Air, which I thought blew fresher on that Side of the House, than on the other. She cou'd have no Suspicion of the Truth, and this Excuse pass'd well enough. Breakfast being ready, she sent a Servant to call me; but I not being prevail'd on to come, she order'd it shou'd be brought where I was. This vex'd me to the Heart; for I was not willing that any body, much less that she shou'd be a

Witness

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Witness of this Interview, tho' at such a Distance, with *Lysander*. I knew she had discerning Eyes; and fear'd she might discover more than I wish'd she shou'd, in one or both of our Faces. I refus'd to drink Tea, scarce spoke, or if I did, it was so peevishly and unmannerly, that I am amaz'd she did not leave me in a Rage to indulge my ill Humour: But she, taking my Behaviour for the Effect of Vapours, continued to sooth me by a thousand endearing Expressions, which were wholly lost upon me: I had no Eyes, no Ears, no Heart open for any Thing but *Lysander*. At length he came, and with a Mein and Air, so soft, so sweet, so graceful, that Painters might have copy'd an *Adonis* from him, fit, indeed, to charm the Queen of Beauty. He was dress'd in a strait Jocky-Coat of green Velvet, richly embroider'd at the Seams with Silver; the Buttons were *Brillians*, neatly set in the Fashion of Roses; his Hair, which is as black as Jet, was ty'd with a green Riband, but not so straitly but that a thousand little Ringlets stray'd o'er his lovely Cheeks, and wanton'd in the Air; a crimson Feather in his Hat, set off to vast Advantage the dazzling Whiteness of his Skin. In fine, he was all over Charms! --- all over glorious! and I believe it impossible for the most Insensible to have beheld him without adoring him! --- What then became of me? --- O God! how fruitless wou'd any Endeavours be to represent what 'twas I felt! --- Transported! --- Ravish'd! --- I wonder the violent Emotions of my *Soul* did not bear my *Body* out of the Window! --- Oh! wou'd it had been so, that Love and Life might then have had an End, and 'scap'd the Woes which both have since endur'd! The great Trampling which the Horses made, (for he had four Servants in rich Liveries, and gallantly mounted, attending him,) oblig'd my Mother to rise from her Chair, to see what it was that occasion'd it. She came to the Window the Moment that *Lysander* was making me a profound Reverence. I know not how I return'd it; but, doubtless, with a Confusion

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suitable to what I felt within, and which was but too visible to my Mother's Observation: For after he was pass'd by, and my Eyes were pursuing him as far as I was able, she rous'd me from the enchanting Dream I had been in, by pulling me by the Sleeve from the Window, and looking earnestly in my Face, as tho' she wou'd penetrate into my Soul, bad me tell her who that Gentleman was. I know not, Madam, (answer'd I, with a Voice which sufficiently discover'd the Insincerity of my Words.) I am afraid, (said she, changing her Countenance to more Severity than ever I had seen her wear,) you know him but too well: Acquaint me therefore this Moment with the Truth; where, when, and how often you have seen him. I cou'd not immediately gather Courage to make any Reply to this Command; and, when I assur'd her, as I truly might, that I had never seen him, but at the *Ball*, she was so far from giving Credit to what I said, that she flew into the greatest Passion I had ever seen her in: And after she had a little vented it in some Exclamations on the Follies of Love, and Disobedience to Parents, left me alone to meditate on her Words.

This was a dreadful Alloy to the Pleasure I had lately enjoy'd: I perceiv'd the Secret I had taken so much Pains, and fancy'd myself so artful in concealing, was, by my own Inadvertency, discover'd.—I cou'd not reflect on the Indignation of a Mother, who, bating the Restraint she laid me under, I had reason to think a most Affectionate one, without a Concern very near *Remorse*, for doing any Thing to occasion it: But when I reflected on the Injustice she did me, (for so my *Love* taught me to consider it,) in condemning my Admiration of a Person so every way deserving as *Lysander* appear'd to be, I regretted nothing but the Power she had over me, lest she should exert it yet more, and deprive me of any future Means of seeing him. I had been happy never to have been more deceiv'd than I was in my Conjecture, that she wou'd take all possible Precaution to

pre-

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prevent my having any Conversation with a Person, whom she so justly believ'd dangerous.

I had not past many Hours in contemplating the Misfortunes I fancy'd myself in, before an old Woman (formerly my Governess, and now a sort of Overseer in the Family) came into the Room, and took upon her to reprove me, in Terms I cou'd not well support. On my giving her some tart Replies, she told me, That she had Orders from my Mother to confine me to my Chamber, till I had learn'd the Lesson of Humiliation. I was forc'd to obey; and, indeed, was well enough contented to be any where, to avoid the hearing of such Sermons: All that I thought an Affliction was, that 'twou'd be impossible for me to *receive* or *answer* any Letters from *Lysander*; and, it was only on this Account that I pass'd three Days of my Confinement in mortal Inquietudes: On the fourth, I saw the *Mercury* to my *Jove*, mounted on a little Heap of Rubbish that the Gardiner had thrown out, and peeping over the Wall. The poor Fellow, as I since understood, had been every one of those Days watching about the House; but not being able to get a Sight of me, either at the Door, or Windows, he at last came round that way. The Appearance of this Man made me almost mad; till casting in my Mind, if there were not a Possibility of giving him Notice of my Condition, Invention furnish'd me with this: I open'd the Window, and thrusting myself out as far as I cou'd, made a Sign to him that he shou'd tarry a little where he was; then taking a Piece of Paper, writ it in these Words:

I Know who you come from; and therefore guess your Business. --- Let your Lord know I am in the strictest Confinement imaginable on his Account. --- I fear it will be impossible for me to continue the Happiness of a Correspondence with him. It will be to no Purpose for you to stay, or return any more on the Design you are sent on; but if you are taken Notice of, may occasion worse Usage, if possible, than what I now endure.

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I pull'd a Lead out of the Sleeve of my Gown, and wrapping it up in this Paper, to give it Weight, made a Shift to hurl it to the Place where he cou'd reach it. He took a Letter out of his Pocket, and held up to shew me, making several Motions; by which I understood he was charg'd to give it me; but by shaking my Head, and putting my Handkerchief to my Eyes, I testify'd the Impossibility of his Attempt, and part of the Concern I was in. I say, but part; for after he was gone, and I began to reflect, that indeed I never shou'd be able to see *Lyfander* more, no Tongue can express the Emotions of my Soul. For many Days I did nothing but weep, and that in so violent a Manner, that the Servants, whom my Mother sent in to wait on me, apprehended I shou'd fall into Fits. This, when it was told her, gave so considerable an Alarm to her Tenderness, that it half dissipated her Anger; and, when I least expected it, she order'd I shou'd come down into the Parlour; and receiving me with her usual Affability, You have suffer'd enough (said she) for the Imprudence of contracting an Acquaintance without my Approbation; but as I shall forget it, at least so far as never to reproach you with it, so I wou'd have you remember it enough to make you avoid, for the future, any Faults of the like Nature. And, to convince me that there is nothing farther between you and this Gentleman, than what you wou'd have me believe, you must resume that Chearfulness which is becoming your Youth, and the little Cause you yet have met with to be otherwise. My Heart was too full to suffer me to make any other Reply to these Words than a low Cursey; but when I had gather'd Courage enough to speak, I endeavour'd to assure her, that my Melancholy proceeded from no other Cause, than being on a sudden depriv'd of all those Diversions I had ever been accusom'd to; but that, since it was her Pleasure, I wou'd use my utmost Efforts to make it easy to me. She seem'd satisfy'd with what I said; and, perhaps, believing she had been a little

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little too severe, from that Time took me abroad with her wherever she went: She carry'd me to visit several Relations, and a great many Acquaintance, whose Society I formerly took Delight in: But, alas! this *now* cou'd afford no Comfort to my bleeding Heart; it rather *increas'd* than *diminish'd* the Anguish of my secret Discontent; and since I cou'd not see *Lyfander*, I cou'd have been better pleas'd to have seen no body. There was no Possibility of conveying a Letter to him; I knew not where to direct; or if I had, notwithstanding the Privileges my Mother now allow'd me, she scarce ever trusted me out of her Sight. Thus, for two Months, did I languish out my Nights in fruitless Wishes, and my Days in the most tormenting (of all) Employments, that of being oblig'd to wear a seeming Gaiety, when all my Soul was full of Horror and Distraction. In this Time a new Family came into the Neighbourhood; they soon made an Acquaintance with ours; and my Mother was so well pleas'd with the good Breeding and Gravity of the Master and Mistress of it, that she enter'd into an Intimacy with them much sooner than was her Custom to do with any body. They visited frequently at our House; and my Mother always made me accompany her to return them, though much against my Inclination; for, as I have already told you, my own Thoughts, unquiet as they were, gave me more Satisfaction than any Company's but *Lyfander* cou'd bestow. Both the Man and the Woman seem'd wonderfully charm'd with me; took all Occasions of complimenting me; and Mrs. *Marvir* (for that was the Name they were call'd by) wou'd often endeavour to engage me in particular Conversation; which I, as carefully as I cou'd, without being rude, avoided: Till one Day, she began a little kind of Raillery on my affecting a Demureness in my Behaviour, which (she said) she was sure was not in my Nature. My Mother, who was willing to take all Opportunities of perswading me to Chearfulness, join'd with her in this Assertion; and be-

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tween 'em both I was pretty much put to it (so inwardly perplex'd as I was) to make any Defence; which, by the Aukwardness of it, discover'd that I had, indeed, something at my Heart which clouded the Gaiety of my Looks. I am afraid (said Mrs. *Marvir* to my Mother) that your Daughter is in Love: I warrant if we shou'd search her Chamber, we shou'd find a Number of amorous Books, and Epistles of the same Nature. I never had that Curiosity, (reply'd my Mother;) but I hope she wou'd receive none of the *latter* without my Knowledge; and I have taken Care to instil such Principles in her Mind, as will not let her be over fond of the other. Will you give me leave to search? (resum'd she laughing.) Yes, with all my Heart, (answer'd I, glad to put an End to this Discourse.) I waited on her up Stairs; where, after she had a little look'd about her, and prais'd the Pleasantness of the Chamber, having a full Prospect of the Garden, I told you (said she) that I shou'd find something here more tender than you wou'd have the World be sensible of. I dare swear (continu'd she, taking a Letter from my Toilet, and giving it to me) the Contents of this may justly be call'd Amorous. I had no sooner cast my Eyes on the Direction, than I knew the Hand to be *Lyfander's*: The Consternation I was in may be more easily imagin'd than express'd: I had not Power to break the Seal, but continu'd looking sometimes on her, sometimes on the Table, and sometimes on the Letter, as wond'ring by what means it had been convey'd there. Cease your Surprise, (resum'd she :) It was no other who laid the Letter on your Toilet than she who took it off, and deliver'd it to your Hand, and she who you need make no Scruple to confide in, since your *Lyfander*; your adoring, dying *Lyfander*, has thought me worthy of the Trust of bearing you his Soul, his Vows, and everlasting Faith. I will make some Excuse (contin'd she) for leaving you above, that you may have Time both to read this and return an Answer, which I have engag'd to bring

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bring him. I cou'd not get leave from my Astonishment to make any Reply to what she said; but when she was gone had my Senses enough about me to lock the Door, and then fed my impatient and transported Wishes with these Lines.

To my Soul's only Treasure, the Adorable CLEOMIRA.

HOW easily might be spar'd the Stings, — the Scorpions, — the never-dying Fires, and all the fancy'd Tortures which Priests invent to ride the frightened World, if any of those Soul-enslavers knew what it was to love like me! Absence from Cleomira is a Hell which all their labour'd Policy wants Skill to paint! — Within my burning Breast ten thousand real Furies rage, and tear me with Variety of Anguish! — Mad with Desire, and wing'd with daring Hopes, sometimes I cou'd tear down the envious Walls, and baffle all Impediments which hold you from me! — Sometimes, despairing, chill'd with deadly Horror, I fancy you regardless of my Woe, and easy under this Restraint! — One Moment imagine I see a favour'd Rival bask in your Smiles, gaze on your Eyes in happy tranquil Pleasure, and kiss that Hand, which, but to touch, I wou'd forego my Life! — The next, distracted, think I behold you dragg'd by a cruel Mother to some detested Choice your Soul abhors! Then soften into more than Female Tendernefs, and weep for you and for myself! — O Cleomira! all the Names of Misery, of Woe, of Anguish insupportable, are poor to what, indeed, my Soul endures for you! — My Passion, and my Pains, are, like your Charms, unutterable! and only can be felt! — This Age of Absence has been spent in nothing but Contrivances to shorten it, till these good People, whose Fidelity you may rely on, were so fortunate to get into your Acquaintance. — O then, thou dearest, brightest, loveliest of thy Sex! indulge the fond Design, and let them not be less regarded by you, now you know they are the Instruments by which you must receive the Testimonies of a Passion too sublime to be

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inspir'd by any but your divine Self; and which can be felt, in so high a Degree, by none but

Your eternally Devoted

LYSANDER.

I need not tell you the Raptures of my overjoy'd Soul at reading this Letter: My Answer to it will sufficiently inform you, that I had no Consideration but of the Extasy it produc'd.

To the most Excellent LYSANDER.

YOU paint the Woes of Love in so extravagant a Manner, that one had need be more than ordinarily sensible of that Passion, to be able to give any Credit to a Description so far beyond what is commonly conceiv'd of it. I am afraid Lysander is too well acquainted with his Perfections not to know the Effects they must produce, and but feigns to feel what he alone is capable of inspiring: Were I really possess'd of as many Charms as your all-powerful Wit wou'd dress me up in, you have a thousand Opportunities of diverting your Thoughts: Business,---Variety of Objects,---and gay Conversation, make your Hours slide away in vastly different Entertainments;--- while I, of much the softer Sex, and consequently susceptible of a deeper Impression, have nothing to do but to indulge a Passion, which in the Beginning seems delectable. --- The Dawn, indeed, promises ten thousand future Joys;--- what the Meridian will be, is wholly in your Faith and Honour to be prov'd. --- But, I have so implicate a Dependance on both, that I will make no Scruple to confess the Transport of hearing from you again, is more than Recompence for all those Inquietudes you have so perfectly represented in yours, and which, I hope, will be no more the Portion of

Your CLEOMIRA.

When

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When I had finish'd this, I went down to the Company, and soon found an Opportunity, unperceiv'd, to slip it into Mrs. *Marvir*'s Hand. Scarce a Day pass'd after this without my receiving a Letter, either through hers or her Husband's Means. I will not trouble you with the Repetition of them, being of no great Consequence to my Story, and would draw it into a Length too tedious for your Patience. By *those* you have heard, you may guess the Purport of the *rest*; so shall only tell you, that every one of his grew more pressing for an Engagement of my Affection, and mine still more complying. I pass'd my Time *contentedly* enough, tho' not so *happily* as I wish'd: The continual Assurances he gave me of his Passion, and the Hopes that thro' these Peoples Means I should soon enjoy the Blessing of his Presence, were Cordials sufficient to keep a Love less ardent than mine alive. And, indeed, I had no great Exercise for my Patience: *Lyfander* was too eager, and his Agents too industrious, to permit *me* to grow cool in my Desires, or imagine *him* to be so.

One Evening, my Mother and I being invited to sup at *Marvir*'s House, while he engaged her in a serious Discourse, his Wife took me into the Garden. The Transports of my beating Heart inform'd me to what End I was brought there, before she had Time to tell me that *Lyfander* waited my Approach in the Arbour. But, when I came near enough to see him, no Confusion sure was ever equal to mine: --- The Reflection that this was but the third Time I had *seen* him, --- but the *second* in which I had an Opportunity to speak to him; --- the Condescensions of my Letters; --- and that which I now gave of meeting him, came all at once into my Head, and I was ready to sink with Shame. But never did any Votary approach the Image of the Saint he worshipp'd with more Humility and awful Reverence than *Lyfander* me: He fell at my Feet, --- embrac'd my Knees, and kiss'd my Hands

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with such a tender Transport,---- such an enchanting Mixture of Delight and Fear, as one would think no false Love could feign, and was impossible to behold unmov'd: My Spirits were in too violent an Agitation to suffer me to raise him from the Posture he was in, till gaining Confidence to do it himself, and interpreting my Disorders in his Favour, he took me in his Arms, all blushing, --- trembling, and incapable of Defence; and laying his Head upon my panting Bosom, seem'd to breathe out all his Soul in fervent Tendernefs. He held me thus some Moments before I knew what I was doing; and when, at last, I struggled to get free, it was so faintly, that he might easily perceive the Liberties he had taken were not unpardonable. I look'd for Mrs. *Marvir*, designing to upbraid *her* for the Boldness her Guest had been guilty of; but she was gone, and the Reproaches I made him were such as did not discourage him from a Repetition of his Crime. In short, all the Time of our being together (which I believe was above an Hour) was past in nothing but offending, and forgiving. I found by myself that Love is a Passion that disdains Restraint, and thought it unjust to be angry at almost any Thing the Force of it might influence him to commit. To go about to tell you what he said, --- in what Manner he look'd, --- and with what Graces every Thing he did, and spoke, were accompanied, would be to wrong him; for no Words, no Accents, no Motions but his own, can give you a just Idea of his Perfections. --- Never was any so form'd to *charm*, and to *betray*! ---- Never was such foul Deceit, Hypocrisy, and Villany, couch'd in such seeming Sweetness, Softness, and Sincerity. ---- Heaven! with what a counterfeited Vehemence has he exclaim'd against the Inconstancy of his Sex! ---- With what an Appearance of Sanctity and Truth has he invoked the Saints and Angels to be a Witness of his Vows! when, lavish of them, he has a thousand --- thousand Times protested, that *Cleomira* should
ever

ever be more dear to him than Life! Oh! record 'em, all ye blessed Spirits, and in the last great Day, when I alone can hope for Justice, bring 'em in dreadful Testimony against him, and force his black, his leprous Soul to own Conviction!

Here the Remembrances of some Passages made this unhappy Lady, wholly unable to prosecute her Discourse; and all that *Belinda* could say to mitigate the Rage of Temper she was rais'd to, prov'd of no Effect, till a Shower of new returning Tears in part allay'd the Tempest. When she was a little come to herself, After this, (resum'd she,) I had many Opportunities, by Mrs. *Marvir*'s Contrivance, of indulging my fond Wishes in *Lyssander*'s Presence; and so zealous was he in making me believe the Passion he pretended was sincere, that in those Days, when there was no other Way to see me, he would come disguis'd, and walk before the House till I had taken notice of him: Then by some Motion discover who he was, and tell me by his Eyes a thousand tender Things; nor stir from the Place, till by my withdrawing myself he knew it was improper he should stay any longer. I cannot but say, fierce as my Passion was before, this uncommon Assiduity of his made a vast Addition to it; and I thought it the greatest Hardship in the World that I could not have the Freedom of conversing with him, without all this Difficulty on both Sides. Mrs. *Marvir*, who kept continual Watch over my Humour, took this Advantage of my Discontent, and whenever we were alone, endeavour'd to heighten it: She was always representing the Injustice my Mother did me, in debarring me from all those Liberties young Ladies in this Kingdom are permitted to enjoy; and made use of all her Cunning to convince me, that those Restrictions were laid upon me, only to wean me by Degrees from the Pleasures of the World, that I might be the more willing to accept of a Husband, who, she told me, my Mother had provided for me: By what I can guess from her Discourse

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course, (said she,) you are to be married to a Country Gentleman, and that in so short a Time, as will amaze you. She spoke this in such a Manner, as gave me no Suspicion of the Truth; and recollecting how much my Mother had labour'd to perswade me into a good Opinion of a Country Life, was assur'd in my Mind that she had really some Body in View, to whom she design'd to sacrifice me; and 'tis impossible to represent the Perplexity this Belief involv'd me in. If any such Thing happen, Madam, (said I,) how should I avoid it? I know not, (answer'd this wicked Woman, having brought me to the Point she aim'd at,) unless, by chusing a Guardian, you entirely divest your Mother of the Power of disposing of you. She said no more at this Time, because my Mother happen'd to come into the Room; but whenever they had an Opportunity, it was with such like Speeches, both she and her Husband entertain'd me; till at last, the Fears of what they infus'd into my Imagination, — the Hopes of enjoying my belov'd Liberty, and my infinitely more belov'd *Lyfander's* Company uncontroll'd, made me resolve to do as they advis'd. I could think of no Person so proper for me to make choice of for a Guardian, as *Marvir* himself. It was not very difficult to perswade him to it, (it being the only Thing he wanted,) tho' at first he seem'd averse. Every Thing being concluded on, one Morning, before my Mother was out of Bed, I left her House, and went to *Marvir's*, whence immediately I took Coach with him for *London*; and by electing him according to Law, put it out of her Power to oblige me to return. Her Behaviour, on the first Knowledge of what I had done, was all Distraction; she fell into Fits, rav'd, came to *Marvir's* House, and without any Regard to that Decorum she was us'd so strictly to observe, loudly exclaim'd against their Treachery, and my Ingratitude and Disobedience. I had not Assurance to appear before her; and they (having gain'd their End) could endure

the

the Brunt of her Upbraidings. In a few Days we remov'd to *London*, and I was out of the Fear of meeting her; but her Tendernefs soon getting the better of her Indignation, ſhe ſent a Letter to me, full of Perſwaſions, in the moſt endearing Terms, to return to her again. I had the Courage to write to her, tho' I had not to ſee her, and return'd an Answer of Excuses for the Measures I had taken; but told her it was wholly owing to that unreaſonable Reſtraint ſhe had laid me under; ---- that I abandon'd her, only in Purſuit of that innocent Liberty, which all Perſons of my Age were deſirous of enjoying; and that I never would make uſe of it to the Diſadvantage of my Reputation, or the Diſhonour of my Family; and that in all material Affairs of Life, tho' I had choſe a *Guardian*, I would do nothing without conſulting *her*. This was far from being any Satisfaction to her; ſhe writ me ſeveral Letters, ſometimes entreating, ſometimes commanding and threatening; and engag'd all thoſe Relations who were near enough to intereſt themſelves in my Behaviour, to come, and talk to me: But the People I was with took care I ſhould be ſeen by none of them; alledging, as a Proof of their Love to me, that they would not have me teas'd with any Sollicitations of that Nature. I was very well ſatisfy'd with their Proceedings: I ſaw *Lyſander* every Day; and while I liſten'd to his Vows, ſhould not have been pleas'd with an Interruption of any kind: That ardent, yet reſpectful Paſſion which appeared in all his Words and Actions, was to me a Heaven, which nothing elſe could give. I had not, for ſome time, any Reaſon to ſuſpect he had the leaſt diſhonourable Thought; for tho' the little Power I had of diſguiſing my Sentiments, had made me guilty of many imprudent Actions, and embolden'd him to the taking greater Freedoms than otherwiſe he would have dar'd to have attempted, yet he offer'd nothing which juſtly could be call'd offensive to Virtue; till one Night; ---- Oh! ever be accuſt that Night, ----
that

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that Hour, --- that damn'd undoing Minute, when all the good Angels slept, and left to Fiends the Fate of *Cleomira*! I had undress'd, and thrown myself on the Bed, restless and uneasy that *Lyfander* had not been to visit me that Day; for it was now become an inconsolable Affliction to me to pass four and twenty Hours without seeing him. I was so buried in Thought, that I heard not the Tread of any Body coming into my Chamber, till I saw a Man stand close by me: It was about Ten a-Clock, at that Time of the Year when there is scarce any Darkness; and willing to indulge Contemplation, I had not call'd for Candles, and could not presently discern who was there; but not suspecting it any other than Mr. *Marvir*, (who might be come to call me to Supper,) without removing from the Posture I was in, ask'd carelessly what he wanted. He must be a very ill Judge of Happiness, (answer'd he,) that could form a Wish beyond the Treasure which this Bed contains. These Words, and the Accent of his Voice, always dear and charming to my Ears, soon told me it was *Lyfander*, and oblig'd me to endeavour to rise; but he had thrown himself down by me while he was speaking, and seizing both my Hands, and gently forcing them to circle his Waste, join'd his Lips to mine with too strenuous a Pressure to suffer me to reproach the Liberties he took. --- What could I do! surpris'd in this unguarded Moment! --- Full of Desires and tender Languishments before, his glowing Touch now dissolv'd my very Soul, and melted every Thought to soft Compliance! --- In short, I *suffer'd*, --- or, rather let me say, I cou'd *not resist* his proceeding from one Freedom to another, till there was nothing left for him to ask, or me to grant. The guilty Transport pass'd, a thousand Apprehensions all at once invaded me! Remorse and Shame supply'd the Place of Extacy! --- Tears fill'd my Eyes, --- cold Tremblings seiz'd my Limbs, --- and my Breast heav'd no more with Joy, but Horror! ---

too sure Presages of that future Woe, which this black Hour brought forth! --- It was not in the lovely Undoer's Power, dear as he was, to make me satisfied with what I had done; and the whole Time he stay'd with me, which was best Part of the Night, I utter'd nothing but Reproaches: The next Day, and many following ones, I entertain'd him in no other Manner; and it was some Weeks before all his Wit, his Tenderness, and seeming Truth, cou'd make me hope I had not done a Deed, I shou'd, all my Life, have Occasion to repent. But what is it a Woman may not in Time be perswaded to, by the Man she loves? He behav'd himself in such a Manner, so kind, so soft, so ravishingly tender, respectful and engaging, --- made so many solemn Protestations of eternal Faith, and imprecated such unheard-of Curses on his Falshood, if ever he shou'd give me Cause to tax him with it, that one wou'd think indeed the most harden'd Villain cou'd not thus have dar'd to dress his Perjuries in such a Form of Sanctity! --- How cou'd I then, who *lov'd* him, *disbelieve* him? --- No, it was not in Nature, --- it was not in Reason, that, after what he had sworn, I cou'd be doubtful of his Sincerity or Honour; and I must have consider'd him as monstrously unworthy of my Love, before I cou'd think there was a Possibility he shou'd ever cease to love me. Thus was I, at last, rais'd to the highest Pinacle of human Felicity! an Assurance of the real and everlasting Tenderness of the Man who took up all my Wishes! But when I thought myself most happy, --- most secure, I was on a sudden thrown from all my Height of Transport, to the lowest State of Misery and Despair. Ever since my being at *Marvir's* House, I had not pass'd one Day without seeing *Lyssander*; and the first Absence, which was about a Week, fill'd me with most terrible Suspicions: I did not fail to acquaint him with 'em by Letters; which he answer'd with the same Fondness he had accusom'd me to, and made Excuses for not visiting me in that Time, which seem'd plausible

plausible enough : When next I saw him, nothing seem'd more endearing, --- nothing more ardent than he seem'd to be, yet he pretended some Business, and stay'd not with me so long as he was wont. After he was gone, happening to cast my Eyes on the Ground, I saw a Paper lying, which I, imagining it might be dropp'd by him, hastily took up : Part of it had been torn off, and what remain'd was so blotted that I could scarce read it ; I discover'd, however, that it was a most passionate Declaration of Love to some Woman ; but who, I was altogether a Stranger, for there was no Name. --- You may believe (my dear *Belinda*) this was enough to give a Heart, so truly tender as mine, a most terrible Alarm ! I laid it up carefully, designing to shew it him when he shou'd come next Day, as he had promis'd he wou'd ; but, alas ! I expected him many succeeding ones in vain ; till growing quite out of Patience, I writ to him according to the Dictates of my Jealousy and Discontent. This, indeed, engag'd a Visit from him ; and after he had again made some slight Pretences for his Absence, began to rally me, with so much Artifice, for the Imagination I had form'd of his being in Love in another Place, that I was weak enough, on his swearing it was so, to believe the Letter I had found was only a foul Copy of one he intended to send to me, in that Time when he had not an Opportunity of seeing me ; and was pretty well satisfy'd as to his Constancy. But tho' I assur'd him, my whole Dependance on the Truth of what he said hung on the Proof of his visiting me as usual, and he seem'd willing I shou'd judge his Truth by that Testimony, yet I saw him not again in another Week. Now the Mist, my good Opinion of him had cast before my Eyes, began to wear off, and *Reason*, unobscur'd by *Passion*, shew'd me how truly wretched I had made myself : --- But what did it avail ? My Fame, my Virtue, and my Peace of Mind were lost, no more to be retriev'd : Penetration was but the Mirror which shew'd me my Deformity, but cou'd
direct

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direct me to no Means which cou'd restore those Beauties, which Guilt and Shame had utterly defac'd. From seeing me every Day, he had already fallen to once a Week; soon, he came but once a Fortnight; afterwards a Month; and that too was to be accounted a Favour.----Soft as I am by *Nature*, and made more so by *Love*, this Usage turn'd me all to Indignation: I rav'd, upbraided, threaten'd, said I know not what, and sometimes was resolv'd to reveng'd my Injuries by his Death; but, alas! he grew not less lovely, for his being less faithful; and whatever I determin'd against him in his *Absence*, was in his *Presence* all dissolv'd. 'Tis true, he never came without renewing his former Protestations of eternal Faith, and coin'd each Time some new-invented Oath to assure me he was still the same. He *seem'd* to mourn the Necessity of being so often absent, with a Tenderness equal to that I *truly* felt; but as perfect a Master as he was in the Art of Feigning, I was too well acquainted with the Force of *Love*, not to know that where it is sincere, no Obstacles wou'd be able to impede the Gratification of it; and one Day, when he had been telling me a tedious Tale of Business, and Hurry of Affairs, and I know not what, which had prevented his coming, I cou'd not restrain the Violence of my just Resentment; Ungrateful Man! (said I,) when watchful for my Ruin, no Business had the Power to hold you; all Day, and every Day, each flying Minute was Witness of your Vows:---- But now,---- now, when I have given up all my Soul!---- am lost to all the World but you! I may alone, unpity'd, mourn my Fate, and curse the Fondness that betray'd me to your Scorn!----He wou'd not suffer me to go on long in this Strain; but taking me in his Arms, and tenderly embracing me, Unjust and Cruel Charmer, (interrupted he,) if I cou'd be capable of the Coldness, the Perfidy you reproach me with, I cou'd not sure have Courage to appear before you:---- Nor cou'd *you*, if you really believ'd me guilty, with that dear, that Angel-Look behold me:---- No, 'tis

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'tis the Height of Passion only makes you talk thus: As such I take it; and tho' I grieve to see you rend your gentle Breast with causeless Agonies, yet I consider it with a kind of Transport, since it assures me I am indeed more valuable to you, than any Merit but my Truth can give me Title to. O the Dissembler! with what an Air of Tenderness did he utter these, and a thousand the like Expressions? and with what inexpressible Endearments were they accompany'd? --- Enrag'd and stormy, as I was before, my Soul, now all becalm'd, again *Believ'd*! --- and was again *Deceiv'd*! --- In this Manner did I continue for a considerable Time; sometimes hoping, --- sometimes despairing, --- but never certain or confirm'd of any Thing! --- all Horror in his Absence, --- all Exstasy in his Presence! --- The Business he pretended, which was Attendance at Court, where he daily expected Preferment, was feasible enough; but then I thought it impossible that no Hour, no Moment in a Week, or in so *many* Weeks, cou'd not be spar'd. --- In fine, my Brain was in a perpetual Whirl; --- Reflection, tost in wild Uncertainty, became disjointed quite; and tho' I was always *Musing*, yet I was often without the Power of *Thinking*; --- all my *Days* were spent in doubtful Expectation, and my *Nights* in Tears, and Heart-rending Agonies, too terrible for Description; --- and if sometimes Nature o'er-weary'd sunk into a Slumber, it cou'd not be call'd Rest; for even then, my ever-wakeful Fancy hurry'd my Spirits with confus'd Idea's in tormenting Dreams: --- *Lyfander's* Image was never from my Sight, and always he appear'd unkind, and far unlike the Dear, --- the Soul-enslaving Lover he had been, and still wou'd feign. To add to my Affliction, I was with Child, and every Motion of the unborn Innocent encreas'd at once my Tenderness and Grief. --- 'Tis not in Thought to form any just Notion of what I felt: --- All Passions, but Hatred, took their Turn to persecute me; and sure, had not Heaven reserv'd me for an Example of its Power in length'ning Woe to a De-
gree

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gree beyond what cou'd be imagin'd, I cou'd not have surviv'd the Torments of an Hour. On his first declining to visit me, I writ often to him; but of late had desisted from giving him that Trouble, because he had told me, his Father, whose Hands they might possibly fall into, wou'd have Curiosity enough to open them. Whether this was Reality, or whether he said so only to spare himself the Pain of counterfeiting a Tendernefs any oftner than he was oblig'd to, in my Presence, I know not; but I had that implicate Obedience to his Will in every Thing, that I very seldom put it to the Venture. But, one Day, after silently enduring an Absence of five Weeks, I was no longer able to restrain the impatient Struggles of my Soul, and sent him these Lines:

To my Too-dear L Y S A N D E R.

PARDON me, if, convuls'd and torn with Pangs too dreadful for Expression, the Anguish of my Soul, in spite of me, breaks forth into Complaining. ---
*Am I for ever to live this Life of curs'd Uncertainty? ---
Is there a Necessity your Actions must always contradict your Words? --- Oh! be once sincere, and tell me which I must believe! --- There was a Time when with a thousand Vows you swore, that Absence was the severest Tryal a Lover cou'd go through, --- yet now you bear it, --- bear it with Ease, --- with Unconcern! --- and can I then still hope you Love? --- O Heav'n! it is not, cannot be! --- By your own Arguments you stand convicted, and I endeavour to deceive myself in vain. --- Heart-rending Thought! I long have held you True, --- believ'd your Oaths with such a Faith, as what we pay to the Divine Mysteries of Salvation; and 'tis difficult, --- 'tis wondrous to think you can be false! --- What then must be the Proof? Madness! --- Confusion! --- Everlasting Woe! --- Horror without a Name! --- Save, --- save me from it! Dissemble yet a little longer; my*
Tears

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Fears will quickly find me to my Grave; let not Despair weigh down my sinking Soul, as well as Body.--- If I no longer have the Power to please you, let the Remembrance of those happy Moments in which I had, engage, at least, your Gratitude,---if not your Love: Bless me with your Friendship:---Pity me, if, no more; for, my Lysander, sure I merit that.---The Thoughts of you anticipate my earliest Prayers, and still continue for my Evening Theme!--- How often, when all have slept, and nothing but the Stars and silent Moon were conscious of my Watchings, have I pour'd out the Anguish of my bleeding Heart, and to those dumb and unavailing Witnesses vented the wild Extravagance of my Passion, rather than wound your Ears with the unwelcome Tale! 'Tis harder to accuse you, than to die; --- yet, while I have Breath, 'twill all be spent in Wailings, if you are still cruel enough to suffer me to linger in a Condition which justly gives me the Title of

The most Injur'd,

and most Miserable

CLEOMIRA.

At the Return of my Messenger, I receiv'd an Answer, which you will scarce believe cou'd be writ by the same Hand; or dictated by the same Heart, from which those you have already heard proceeded.

To the Lovely CLEOMIRA.

YOUR Sexes Souls are of such narrow Space, that the least Passion swells them even to bursting: I wou'd have the Woman I admire endeavour to enlarge her Genius, and find room for other Views than Love.--- Not but I think myself infinitely oblig'd to yours, and shall

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shall never cease the Professions of mine. — I will see you in a few Days, and, if possible, convince you that I am

Your most Faithful

LYSANDER.

One wou'd think I needed no other Proof than the Style and the Shortness of this *Billet*, to inform me, that I was, indeed, as wretched as I cou'd be; but spite of Reason, I must join in his Barbarity, and be my own Tormenter. — My Soul, too curious, wou'd search deeper still, though sure to find what wou'd but more distract me. The Fellow, whom I employ'd to carry my Letter, told me, that not finding *Lysander* at home, he was directed to the Place where he was, and deliver'd it to him in the Presence of a young Lady, whom he was leading to a Chariot; and that as soon as he had writ the Answer they went out together. This was enough to give my already *justly*-suspecting Heart a jealous Curiosity; and I immediately dispatch'd him again to find out, if possible, who the Lady was. He was so successful in his Enquiry, that he brought me word that her Name was *Melissa*, and that *Lysander* was frequently with her; --- that they had been seen together at the Play, at the Ring, in the Mall, and several other publick Places. If I was before alarm'd, what now became of me, at this Information? I had formerly had an Acquaintance with this Woman, and knew her Temper to be the most intreaguig upon Earth; and though from a very mean *Fortune*, and worse *Character*, a Gentleman of a good Estate had rais'd her to an envy'd State of Grandeur, she had neither Gratitude nor Conduct sufficient to prevent her from *coquetting* with every Man that thought her worth taking Notice of; nay, she was so notoriously Imprudent, I may say *Shameless*, that she sought all Opportunities of dishonouring her Husband, and cou'd not hear of a Man fam'd for any Perfection,

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fection, without desiring to engage him: She wou'd write to the most absolute Strangers; and her being often repuls'd by those whose Discretion made them despise her, did not discourage her from attempting others. This is (*Belinda*) the true Character of this vile Woman; and the Reflection, that a Creature so every way undeserving shou'd rob me of his Heart, rous'd that little Pride which all Women have some Share of, to a *Disdain* which, not able to overcome my more superior *Softness*, gave me Disorders which cannot be express'd. Since I am to be abandon'd, (said I to my self,) I ought to be pleas'd that he has abandon'd me for a Creature whom none will envy him the Possession of: --- One, who is not of a Humour to regard any one farther than the Reputation of being admir'd by him: --- One, to whom all Men are alike; and, as charming as he is, will not fail to sacrifice him to the next that makes his Addresses to her. And yet, who knows (cry'd I again) but this unfaithful, --- this inconstant Creature, may engage him longer than I, with all my Truth and *Tenderness*, cou'd do: --- She has *Arts* to which my *Innocence* is a Stranger, and will, no doubt, make use of them all to secure a Conquest so much to the Advantage of her Glory. In this Manner did I torment myself; and though I thought nothing cou'd add to what I felt before, yet now I found, that to be neglected for *another* was a Sting more terrible than the Neglect itself. Once I believ'd that the *Death* of *Lyfander* wou'd be the extreamest of all Woes; but now I wish'd him dead, rather than in the Possession of a *Rival*.

When next I saw my Traytor, I utter'd all that my Rage and Jealousy suggested; but, with his usual Artifice, he appear'd unmov'd: And when I upbraided him with the Leisure he had to wait on *others*, when he had none for *me*, he swore, That being an intimate Acquaintance of her Husband's, and meeting them by accident at a Place where he had Business, was desir'd by him to conduct her where she was going;

going; which Piece of Gallantry, he said, he cou'd not handsomely refuse. To give the more Credit to this, he seem'd to dislike her Person, --- ridicul'd her Humour, --- and laugh'd so heartily at my being capable of any Uneasiness on her Account, that I was half perswaded to believe him. I had not, however, so entire a Dependance on his Truth, but that I employ'd (unknown to *Marvir's* People, who I found were his Creatures) the same Man, who had brought me the first Intelligence, to watch him wherever he went, resolving to be satisfy'd one way or other. Alas! I fancy'd that if I cou'd be once thoroughly assur'd of his Perfidiousness, I shou'd be able to tear him from my Soul, at least extirpate all the Tenderness I had for him: But, how little did I know myself? When by the Diligence of my Spy, I found out that he visited her often, --- was with her even at those very Times when he pretended the utmost Regret that he cou'd not be with me; --- nay, discover'd that they had private Meetings; and, by all Circumstances, was convinc'd, not only that she was a Rival infinitely more belov'd than I, but also that she was in Possession of all those Joys, which to obtain, I had forfeited my Innocence, my Honour, and my Peace of Mind for ever: --- In spite, I say, of all these Proofs, --- these stabbing Proofs of his Ingratitude, I cou'd not, --- did not love him less. I reproach'd him, indeed, and endeavour'd to make him think my Resentment had extinguish'd my Tenderness; but he still deny'd each particular of my Accusation, and, at last, seem'd angry that I distrusted his Sincerity; till I, mean-spirited Wretch, was forc'd to appear satisfy'd with what he said, least by persisting to *alledge* what, I found, he was determin'd never to *confess*, I shou'd provoke him never to see me more. And when I consulted my fond doating Heart, found I cou'd better bear to share him with another, than have no Interest in him at all: But what I suffer'd in such a Submission may, perhaps, be guess'd, but never describ'd. It was now
my

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my Woes fell thick upon me; my Pregnancy began now to discover itself to all who saw me; and *Marvir* and his Wife, who had all this Time counterfeited an Ignorance of what had pass'd between me and *Lysander*, seem'd prodigiously uneasy at it; pretended a Concern for the Reputation of their House; us'd me in a Manner which I little expected from them, of all the World; and told me plainly, that I must not continue with them any longer; but if I wou'd go into the Country till I was deliver'd of my Burden, they wou'd enquire for a Place where I might be in private. I complain'd to *Lysander* of their Unkindness; but receiv'd very little Consolation from him: He only told me he was sorry they shou'd behave otherwise to me than I had Reason to expect, but that he believ'd they *meant* well; and that he cou'd not help joining with them in the Opinion, it was best for me to go into the Country. My Concern for leaving a Place which contain'd all I valu'd in the World, and the cool Tranquillity with which he advis'd me to banish myself from him, were new Stabs to my already-bleeding Heart: But I had now been a good while accusom'd to receive Wounds of that Nature, and my Spirits were too much depress'd with a continual Weight of Sorrow, to be able to exert themselves to resent almost any Usage. Besides, what could I do? helpless as I was! I had no Friend to whom I durst make Application; and must be oblig'd, in the Condition I was, to do whatever those, in whose Power I had put myself, would have me. They were so eager for my Departure, that a Place was soon found for me to go to; and in a few Days I took leave of that Town, and that Person, for whose sake I had renounced every Thing that ought to have been dear to me. *Lysander* had indeed the Complaisance to accompany me a few Miles on Horseback; and perceiving me ready to die with Grief, made a thousand Promises of coming down to visit me in a short Time, tho' I had no Reason from his late Behaviour, to hope he would

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do as he said; yet this seeming Kindness a little reviv'd me, and I went thro' my Journey with more Fortitude than I imagin'd I could. As soon as I arriv'd at the Place destin'd for my Abode, I writ to him, reminding him of the Promise he had made, and conjuring by every tender Plea I could invent, to make it good; but I receiv'd no Answer. Always willing to excuse him as far as I was able, I fancied my Letter had by some Accident miscarried, and sent another; but to as little Purpose as before. — Then I grew wild with Grief, and was ready, in some ungovernable Sallies of Passion, to lay violent Hands on my own Life. — I resolv'd at last, if possible to extort an Answer from him; and prevail'd on a Countryman, for a considerable Gratification, to ride to Town on purpose to deliver a Letter into his own Hands, and charg'd him not to return without some Token he had seen him. The Contents of what I writ were these:

To my Inhuman and Unrelenting Charmer.

IS it then possible that Lysander, the protesting Lysander, can from all Angel change to a very Fiend? For only they delight in the Perdition they occasion. — Have you with your Love thrown off all Pity too and Complaisance, that you vouchsafe not to condole, at least, the Ruins you have made? — O most ungrateful, cruel, barbarous, of all that ever was call'd Man! — What have I done that can deserve such Usage? — Is it because I have forsook the Ties of Duty, Interest, Honour, — given up my Innocence, — my Peace, and everlasting Hopes, that you despise me? — Monster, for whom have I done this? — Can you reflect it was for you, and your whole Soul not melt in Tenderness and soft Compassion? — Yes, yes, you can! — Wretch that I am! — I have cast away all that could make me truly valuable, and now am justly subjected to your Scorn: — But tho' I live unworthily of your Love, my

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Death must surely give you some Concern, --- at least, the Manner of it, when you shall know it was for you I died: --- That my last Breath form'd nothing but your Name; --- and in the extreamest Agonies of my departing Soul, lamented more your Cruelty than all that dreadful Separation could inflict. --- O do not, therefore, trifle with a Passion, which, if the Strength of Reason in your Sex keeps you from being too deeply touch'd with, is too impetuous for the Weakness of mine to resist; and who can tell how far the Torrent may transport me? --- History is not without Millions of Examples of Women, who have dar'd to die, when Life became a Burden; and sure, if any e'er could justify Self-Murder, the wretched Cleomira may: --- None ever lov'd, --- none ever despair'd like me, or had so just a Cause for both. --- The Means of Death are always easy to be obtain'd; and I am this Moment hurried to that Rage of Temper, that I know not how long I shall be able to refrain the Use of it. --- O then be quick, and save my Soul the Guilt of Murder, and your own the Pangs of never-ending Remorse, which, when too late to remedy, you'll feel! --- Yes, forgotten and abandon'd as I am, when I am dead, my Ghost will be before you ever, haunt all your Dreams, --- poison your Pleasures, and distract Reflection: Then, though I want a Voice, my Wrongs will speak, and rouse your sleeping Conscience to Remembrance of your Vows, --- your broken damning Vows! --- Heaven! that Heaven, whose Blessings you have renounc'd, whose Curses you have imprecated, if ever you prov'd false, will then exert the Power of swiftest Vengeance, and Penitence be vain to wash away your Guilt, or call me back to Life! --- For me, I have nought to fear; I feel already all the Pains of Hell; nor can another World torment me worse than this has done; --- Horror and Madness overtake me! --- I know not what I say, and to my other Crimes am ready to add Blasphemy; --- curse Heaven, and Earth, and Man; --- wish to behold the World in Flames; --- the Universe dissolv'd; --- for all, all are Foes to wretched Cleomira! --- O ease

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me, — pity me, — write to me, — see me; if not for mine, yet for the sake of the Dear yet unborn; — the tender Pledge of our once mutual Love! — Think how the frightened Innocent starts at its Mother's Anguish, and is a sad Partaker of all the Sufferings you inflict on me. — I will, if possible, support the galling Load of Life till the Return of my Messenger; but in your Answer is the Fate of

The Undone

CLEOMIRA.

All the Horror and Distraction which I endeavour'd to represent in this Letter was infinitely short of what I truly felt. I had so little Hope of Comfort from him it was sent to, that all the Time of the Fellow's being gone I had one continu'd Agony, with the Apprehension that at his Return I should be more ascertain'd of *Lysander's* Cruelty; and had his Stay been long, I believe it would have been impossible for me to have supported it with Life; but the poor Man's Speed out-run my Expectations, eager as they were; and though it was fifty Miles to London, he dispatch'd his Business, and came back in two Days. As soon as he saw me, he gave me a Testimony of his Success in the Business I employ'd him in; and trembling between Hope and Fear, I found in it these Words;

To the Unkind CLEOMIRA.

THE Discovery you make of your causeless Uneasiness, gives me an infinite Concern: I had writ to you before, but that I waited to hear first from you, which, by all that is sacred, I never have done till now; and if you have sent, as your Messenger informs me you have, your Letters have miscarried. Be assur'd that I am still the same I ever was, and if any Part

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of that Rapidity which in the Days of Courtship I profess'd, be now abated, it is sufficiently made up by an Encrease of Tenderness. — I beg, for the sake of the dear Infant you mention, and for mine, who suffer with you in the Knowledge of your Grievs, that you will entirely banish them as Enemies as well to Reason, as to Happiness. I hope the Hurry of my Affairs will shortly have an End, and I shall enjoy the boundless Pleasure of seeing you again; till when I hope you will be satisfy'd with this Assurance, join'd to the innumerable others I have given you, that I am,

Yours for ever,

LYSANDER.

You will certainly believe I was not in my Senses, when I shall tell you, that these few, and indeed but ill-dissembled Lines of Kindness, drove from my Bosom all the Anxiety that had possess'd it. I thought of nothing now but Joy and Rapture; and, in spite of all the Reasons *Lysander* had given me, accus'd myself of Injustice for writing to him in the Manner I did; and to make Reparation for the Reproaches of my last, dictated another according to the Transport I now was in. — I ought to blush at the Memory of so shameful a Weakness; but as I have promis'd you a faithful Relation of my Story, will omit nothing that may give you a just Notion of my Folly, or his Perfidiousness and Ingratitude. The Lines I writ were these;

To my Ador'd LYSANDER.

TO make you able to conceive the Extacy with which I read your dear obliging Letter, I must be able to inspire you with that Sublimity of Passion which Charms, like your own, have only the Power of doing. But think, *Lysander*, think what a Soul must feel,
rais'd

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rais'd from the lowest Hell of Misery to the highest Heaven of Felicity: -- Oh! if I may credit those endearing Lines, I have all that Fate can give! -- If, did I say? I must, -- I will: -- Lyfander is all Honour; and he a thousand Times has sworn himself my everlasting Votary: -- How have I wrong'd you then, -- Divinest of your Sex! -- But you must pardon me; -- I love, -- am absent, -- am unworthy; -- and in such a Circumstance, Patience were a Virtue out of Season. -- O therefore, let it not be too long before you bless me with your Presence, lest I again relapse; -- again be wretched: -- Haste to my Arms, while Hopes are quick within me, while vigorous Transport sparkles in my Eyes, and my Soul glows with pleasing Expectation. -- Let not the Fervour of my Joy abate, till in your Arms I have nothing left to wish, and I indeed can say thou art all mine, as I am thine: My for-ever-dear Lyfander.

Thine in the most passionate

and tender Manner,

CLEOMIRA.

After this, I liv'd for some Time in more Tranquillity than I had known for many Months; and tho' it was past my Doubt that he had intrigued with *Melissa*, yet believing it but a transient Amour, of which he was now grown weary, found it no Difficulty to pardon him; and this renewing of his Tenderness to me, made me assure myself it wou'd be in the Power of no Woman, hereafter, to engage him so far as to render him forgetful of what he owed to me: But, alas! this Peace of Mind was not of any long Continuance: Eight or nine Days being elaps'd, without my receiving any Letter from him, I still thought he was on coming, and the Hopes of seeing him, made full Amends for the not hearing from him; but after that, my Fears again

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return'd, and I grew restless as before. I constantly walked out every Evening into a Field that overlooked the Road, my Expectations of meeting him not having quite forsook me. One of the Times that I was thus employ'd, I encounter'd a Person whose *Sight* gave me as much *Surprise*, as the *News* she brought me did *Affliction*. It was my Nurse, an honest faithful Creature, who hearing I had left *London*, enquir'd at *Marvir's* House where I was gone; but receiving no Satisfaction from them, by diligently asking among the Neighbours, heard by one, who, by some Accident had learn'd it, that it was at ****; and so, by describing me to the Stage-Coachman, discover'd what Part of the County I was carried to, and had travell'd down on purpose to acquaint me that my Mother lay at the Point of Death;---that it was believed her Grief for my Behaviour had been the Cause of her Illness;--- that all she seem'd to lament, was the Misfortunes she feared wou'd fall upon me,---and wish'd for nothing but to see me before she died. This sad Account given me by the poor Woman, in the most moving Circumstances, struck me to the very Soul:--- I now began to consider *whom* it was I had abandon'd, and *for* whom; and the more I reflected on *Lyfander's* Ingratitude, the more ingrateful did I appear myself:--- To be the Occasion of a *Parent's* Death,--- a Parent who had always most tenderly lov'd me, and from whom I never had been absent (till the Time of my utterly forsaking her) two Days together in my Life, fill'd me with so just a Horror, that I know not if it wou'd have been even in *Lyfander's* Power to have consol'd me! How gladly wou'd I now have return'd to her, and implor'd her Pardon for my Errors,---endeavour'd to give her Comfort, and never leave her more: But, alas! the Condition I was in deterr'd me from the Execution of these pious Wishes: I could entertain no Thoughts of appearing before her till I was deliver'd of that Witness of my Shame: Nor cou'd the poor Woman persuade

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swade me to it; she rightly judg'd, that to see me as I then was, would rather be an *Encrease* of her Affliction, than any *Mitigation* of it; and told me she would return without saying she had seen me, since there was no Excuse to be made for my not coming to *London*, but that which had better remain untold. The Concern which I perceiv'd in the Countenance of this faithful Creature, and the mannerly Freedom which she took in expressing her Grief for the Misfortunes I had brought on myself and Family, oblig'd me to give her the whole History of my Affairs since the fatal Choice I made of *Marvair* for my Guardian; and withal, conjur'd her to make all possible Enquiry into *Lysander's* Character and Behaviour, and to give me a faithful Account of what she could discover. But it seems she had never learn'd to write, and I was unwilling the Secret should be trusted to any other Hand, therefore desir'd she would treasure it up in her Memory till I came to Town; which I resolv'd to do as soon as I was brought to Bed. I did not think it proper to carry her to the House where I was, but giving her something to refresh herself in her Journey back, took my Leave of her, who parted from me with Tears in her Eyes, and all the Marks of an undissembled Grief. The more I ruminated on the sad Relation she had made me, the deeper Impression it made in my Soul; and that, join'd to *Lysander's* Unkindness, who, in spite of his Promise, neither came, nor sent to me, threw me into a Condition which is not to be conceiv'd. The Horrors of my *Mind* had such an Influence over my Body, that it was impossible I shou'd be able to bring a living Child into the World: My Youth, however, and the natural Goodness of my Constitution, brought me through that dangerous State, in which those who find most Ease, have little Reason to be assur'd of Life. --- I was safely deliver'd of a Boy; but, alas! the Grief-kill'd Infant never saw the Light, and I knew nothing what it was to be a Mother, but the Pains. It was certainly only my Im-

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patience to be gone from a Place where I cou'd hear
 nothing of *Lyfander*, which made me willing to use
 any Means proper for the Recovery of my Strength;
 but the Hopes of seeing him, and knowing from
 his own Mouth my Doom, invigorated my droop-
 ing Spirits, and enabled me to endure Life, rather
 than die in the terrible Uncertainty I then was in. I
 found I was in a little more than a Month's Time in a
 Condition to travel, and was too eager to delay a Mo-
 ment. I wou'd not go to *Marvir's* House; because I
 was assur'd I should hear nothing there, but what they
 were order'd by *Lyfander* to tell me; and the late
 Unkindness they had shew'd me, made me resolve
 never to live with 'em again, but as soon as I got
 to *London*, went directly to my Nurse's; where I
 had the mournful Account of my dear Mother's
 Death told in so tender and moving a Manner, that
 I too was ready to expire at hearing it. When the
 first Hurry of my Grief, for so great and irretriev-
 able a Loss was over, I began to question her about
Lyfander. She told me she had neglected nothing
 that might be conducive to my Peace; but that all
 she had been able to learn concerning him, was,
 that he had lately an Intrigue with *Melissa*; that by
 their ill Conduct it had been discover'd to her Hus-
 band, who, as a just Reward for her Infidelity, had en-
 tirely cast her off; that she was now reduc'd to the
 same wretched Circumstances this injur'd Gentleman
 took her from; that *Lyfander* had little Regard to
 the Miseries he had contributed to bring her to; and
 she was become one of the most expos'd and unpitied
 Women in the World. I confess I was ungenerous
 enough to find some little Consolation in the Know-
 ledge of my Rival's Misfortunes; not but, as much
 Reason as I had to hate her for being the first Occa-
 sion of estranging the Affection of *Lyfander* from
 me; I should have highly discommended him for
 his Neglect of her in her Affliction, had it fallen on
 her only through her Love to him; but as I knew
 her Inclination to be so amorous, (to give it no
 worse

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worse a Name,) that it had influenc'd her to commit *numerous* Faults of the like Nature, and even without the least Temptation, I look'd on her as an unworthy Commiseration. --- But, to leave her to all the Miseries which attend a common Prostitution, I resolv'd to know how I now stood in *Lyfander's* Opinion. I writ to him, acquainting him that I was come to Town, desiring to see him. When I had done that, I began to consider my Affairs as to my Money: I thought it unsafe to be lodg'd any longer in *Marvir's* Hands, and employ'd one to bring him to an Account; but that Villain had made such Bills, and manag'd every Thing so much to his own Advantage, that of my three thousand Pounds, I found I had not much more than fifteen hundred remaining. The Person who I had engag'd in this Business knew very well what my Father left me, and perswaded me to have Recourse to Law; but the other knew himself secure enough as to that Point, and when it was hinted to him, he writ me a Letter to tell me, That if I insisted to bring him to any publick Account for the Money he had laid out, he cou'd easily prove it had been expended only for my Use; and bid me consider, that in the Condition I had been there was Occasion for more than a trifling Sum, to bribe those to Secrecy who were oblig'd to be entrusted with the Knowledge of it. This was enough to let me see, if I attempted any Thing against him, he would expose me in the most shameful Manner he could. I was glad therefore to accept what little I cou'd get, without daring to molest him for the rest. But I will not (my dear *Belinda*) detain your Attention with any Particulars of this, which (in Comparison with my others) I look'd on as a trifling Vexation. Above a Week was past since I sent to *Lyfander*, and he had not yet answer'd my Letter. I was very well assur'd he had received it; and tho' I had little Hopes of the Continuance of his *Affection*, I expected from his *Complaisance* some sort of an Excuse for the Inhumanity he had been guilty

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of: My *Amazement* at this unlook'd-for Slight was almost equal to my *Grief*: I now indeed felt more Resentment than I had ever been capable of before: Neither to come to me, nor write, after so long an Absence, and all I had suffer'd on his Account, cou'd make me consider him no otherwise than as the vilest, and most justly to be abhor'd of all his Sex: And since I had no other way to revenge, resolv'd to use my Pen to him in such a Manner as shou'd let him know I was no less insensible of his Indignities, than I had been of his Love. But before I did so, an Accident happen'd, to give me a fresh Theme for my Reproaches. Going thro' the *Strand* one Day in a Chair, it was suddenly stopp'd by a Footman, who told me his Lady desir'd to speak with me, and entreated I wou'd come into her Chariot. Neither the Livery, nor the Wearer of it were Strangers to me, and I knew he belong'd to a Lady, who, when I frequented the Court, was one of my greatest Intimates; and I immediately discharg'd my Chair, and did as he desir'd. Nothing could receive me with greater Demonstrations of Kindness than *Semantbe*, (for so I shall call her;) and after she had gently upbraided me with Breach of Friendship, for not letting her know where I had been all the Time of my absconding, began to ask me a thousand Questions about my Affairs. But mine was a Story very improper to be related to her, who, tho' I knew she had a great deal of good Nature, was not of a Temper to have approv'd my Proceedings, and therefore I turn'd the Discourse as soon as I could into an Enquiry after her Affairs; which she very ingenuously inform'd me of, little suspecting the Effect of what she told me. I am (said she) very near changing my Condition; but the Person who has prevail'd on me to do it, is so truly deserving, that without a Blush I may confess, that the sooner I yield to his Desires, the sooner I make myself the happiest of my Sex. Ah, Madam! (cried I, interrupting her,) take care how you de-
pend

pend on the Sincerity of Mankind; it requires more Experience than you or I are Mistresses of, to form any just Judgment of their Deserts. It is no Wonder that you talk so, (reply'd she,) since I have not told you the Name of my Charmer; but when I have, I doubt not but you will acknowledge, as all the World who know him do, that every Perfection that Heaven can adorn a Mortal with, are center'd in my Admir'd --- O God! who was it but my *Lyfander* that she nam'd. --- Lightning could not have blasted me more than this one Word; and I believe the most artful of all my Sex cou'd not in such a Circumstance have dissembled her Confusion; but the Shock was too mighty for my Weakness to sustain, and wholly depriv'd of Speech, I fell against the Side of the Chariot senseless, and in all Appearance dead, and came not to myself till I was brought to *Semanthe's* Lodgings. The first Thing I saw when I open'd my Eyes was her, busily employ'd in helping the Maids to use Means for my Recovery: The Sight of her, and the Remembrance of what she had told me, threw me again into Convulsions, which lasted for some Time; and when, at last, I had gathered Power to speak, it was in such a Fashion, so wild, and so confus'd, that the Standers-by believ'd I was taken with a sudden Fit of Frenzy. I desir'd a Chair might be call'd to carry me home; and making some sort of an Apology, I know not what, for the Trouble I had given, took leave of my happy Rival. My poor Nurse (for I had been at her House ever since I came to Town) was terribly alarm'd at the Condition she beheld me in; and, when I repeated the Occasion of it, join'd with me in the most bitter Curses we could both invent on the Perfidiousness of Mankind. I remain'd for some Time in mortal Agonies, unable to determine on any Thing; sometimes I was for returning to *Semanthe*, to acquaint her with *Lyfander's* Engagements to me, and implore her to forbear any farther Invasion on a Right I had so dearly purchas'd; ---
sometimes

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Sometimes I was for going to *Lysander's* House, and by publickly reproaching him with his Vows, deter him from the Breach of them: --- But Modesty rejected both these Resolutions as soon as form'd; and, by my Nurse's Perswasion, (who fear'd that proceeding to any Violence, would be altogether unavailing, and only serve to expose me more,) I contented myself with uttering the Fury I was possess'd of in a Letter; which, tho' incoherent and distracted as my Mind, I believe you will not think it too severe for the Occasion.

To the Inconstant, Ungenerous, and Perfidious *LYSANDER*.

I Have so long been accustomed to Indignities from you, that had I not in Possession your Letters, those Witnesses of your well-dissembled Tenderneſs, I ſhou'd believe I had been enchanted with ſome delightful Dream, and that there never was any ſuch Thing, in Reality, as that *Lysander* cou'd take the Pains to make me believe he lov'd me, ſince for no other Cauſe than returning the Paſſion he pretended, he now can uſe me with a Brutality as unexampled as my own Meaneſs of Spirit, which has hitherto ſuffer'd me to ſit down tamely with my Wrongs, and not endeavour, at leaſt, a ſuitable Revenge. --- Poiſons and Daggers are the Upbraidings you ſhould receive from me: --- Yet I, fond Wretch, have ſtill ſubjected my very Will to yours, wrung my own Hands, while you have wrong my Heart; --- and when a thouſand Times, with more than Devil-like Cruelty you've conjur'd up all that was raging in me, with my own Tears I have appeas'd that Tempeſt, which only Blood, --- your deareſt Blood ſhould have had Power to quell. --- Not one Particular of your Baſeneſs is unknown to me; --- Cold, --- Cold Betrayer; --- Dark deſigning Villain, your Neglect, your Abſence, your Silence all ſprung but from one Cauſe, that curſed Mutability of Temper, which damns half
your

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your Sex, as fond Belief and Tenderneſs does ours. — I was not ignorant of your Intrigue with Meliſſa, even from the Beginning, to the guilty Rapture which concluded it: — Yet I was patient, and but to Heaven accus'd you of Perſidiouſneſs: — Fool that I was, I hop'd my Truth, my Conſtancy, and Softneſs, in Time, might make a Convert of you; — But now, now that I find you are for ever loſt! that Marriage is about to give another that Title, which alone is due to me by your own Vows, and by all thoſe Sufferings I have bought it with! — now I grow, indeed, like you, a very Fiend, and methinks cou'd ſmile at Miſchief! — Yes, if you can, — if you dare attempt to make Semanthe yours, may the Prieſt, about to join you, be ſtruck ſpeechleſs; — may Earthquakes ſhake the Ground, — the Temple's Roof uncloſe; — Thunder, and darting Lightnings proclaim Heaven's juſt Abhorrence of your Mockery of the ſacred Ceremony, and mark the Bridegroom for a vile Prophaner! — But, Oh! ſhou'd all the Curſes which my Injuries deſerve, and jealous Fury can invent, fall on you, — ſhou'd Judgments terrify, or even Pity for me diſſwade you from her Arms, what wou'd it avail? — Cou'd it afford one Grain of Comfort to my tormented Soul? — No, — Since you're mine no more, no matter whoſe: — Your Heart is loſt, for ever loſt to me; and when compar'd with that, your Body is a Trifle. — Go on then, — purſue the Dictates of your changing Nature; be proud of Perjury, and wanton in Deceit: A Time will come, when Remorſe will be ſufficiently my Avenger. — For me, I ſhall not long endure the Pain of Thought; Madneſs or Death will eaſe me of Reflection; but while I have Life or Senſe to know how very wretched you have made me, be kind enough, at leaſt, to feign Compaſſion for the Woes you give, and lay the Blame of your Inconſtancy on Fate, — the unavoidable Impulſe of your Nature, — or any Thing which may make me think you pity me; for ſince, in ſpite of all you have done, I ſtill muſt love you, I wou'd fain imagine you poſſeſs'd of ſome one good Quality, to juſtify my Paſſion. — O God!

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*I can no more! — Farewel, dear, cruel Destroyer of
the Soul, and Ruin of the Everlasting Peace of*

The most Wretched

CLEOMIRA.

In about four or five Days after I sent, I receiv'd an Answer; which I think proper to repeat, that you may see there is nothing of Rude or Base impossible for a *Man* to do, when once a *Woman*, by forfeiting her Honour, has put it in his Power to use her as he pleases.

TO CLEOMIRA.

I Receiv'd your Letter with some Surprise, but with none of that Tenderness you seem to aim at inspiring, or what really has possess'd my Soul at reading some of your former ones; nor can you blame my Change of Humour, since your own Extravagance has been the Cause. Believe me, Cleomira! whatever in our Days of Courtship we profess, the Excess of any Passion is ridiculous to a *Man* of Sense; and Love, of all others, more excites our Mirth, than our Pity. — That foolish Fondness, with which your Sex so much abounds, is before Enjoyment charming, because it gives us an Assurance of obtaining all we ask; but afterwards 'tis cloying, tiresome, and in Times grows odious. — Had your Passion, at least the Shew of it, been less violent, mine might have had a longer Continuance; and as there is nothing more unnatural, than that a *Woman* shou'd expect a *Man* can be in Love with her always, the best Way to retain his Complaisance, is, not to take Notice of his Alteration, or oblige him, by a troublesome Importunity, to explain himself in the Manner I now am forc'd to do to you: I confess, indeed, that I am going to be marry'd to a *Lady*, whose Discretion will, I hope, prevent any of those Discontents and Jealousies
which

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which first made my Amour with you grow uneasy. That I once lov'd you, I shall ever acknowledge, and desire you wou'd be as just in assuring yourself, that your own Mismanagement was the Cause I cou'd do so no longer. The little Storms of Fury which appear in your Letter, are too frequently met with in Stories, to be wonder'd at, and are of as little Consequence to move me to either Fear or Pity, as your proclaiming the Occasion wou'd be to the Disadvantage of my Reputation; but if you can resolve to confine your Passion within the Bounds of Prudence, tho' you lose a Lover, you shall always find a Friend in

LYSANDER.

I am very apt, indeed, to believe that *Lysander* in this spoke the Sense of all his Sex; and one wou'd think that such an *Eclaircissement* was enough to have cur'd me of all Passions, but Disdain and Hate. — Nothing sure was ever so insulting, so impudent, so barbarous; yet was my Soul, and all its Faculties, so truly his, that tho' at the first Reading I resolv'd not to think of him but with Detestation, I relaps'd immediately, and instead of wishing I had never seen him, found a secret Pleasure, even in the midst of Agony, in the Reflection that he had lov'd me once: And, if at any Time a Start of just Resentment rouz'd itself within me, when I wou'd give it Vent in *Curses*, a Power superior to Rage arrested the flying Breath, and chang'd it into *Blessings*. I still lov'd him with such an Adoration, that I cou'd not bring myself to think that any Thing he cou'd do was wrong, and began indeed to lay the Blame of my Misfortune on my own Want of Merit to engage the Continuance of his Affection, rather than on any Vice in him; and it was with all the Difficulty in the World, I forbore writing to him again, to tell him so. — Was ever any Infatuation, — was ever any Madness equal to mine! — O God! the bare Remembrance of it makes me contemn myself, and acknowledge, that a Creature so meanly Sou'd deserv'd no better Fate.

The

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The poor RECLUSE for some Moments was able to proceed no farther; a thousand mingled Passions now struggled in her labouring Breast, with too much Vehemence to be suppress'd; and throwing herself down on the Couch she sat on, began again to pour out the Anguish of her Soul in a Torrent of Tears. Tho' *Belinda* cou'd not forbear sympathising with her, yet finding that her Grievs were indeed past Remedy, thought nothing she cou'd say wou'd any way avail to her Consolation, and only bore her Company in this dumb Scene of Sorrow: But the RECLUSE had too much Complaisance and good Nature, to be able to endure the Influence she perceiv'd her Afflictions had over the tender Disposition of the other, and composing herself as well as she cou'd, continu'd her Discourse in this Manner:

If (said she) I cou'd have found Words of Force sufficient to have vented any of those various Passions which tormented me, my afflicted Soul, perhaps, might have receiv'd some little Intervals of Ease; but there were none to express a Condition such as mine! — To love to the highest Degree of Tenderness, what I ought to have *abhorr'd*; — to adore what I knew deserv'd my utmost Scorn; — to have bury'd Hope, and wild Desire survive; — to have Shame, Remorse, and all the Vultures of conscious Guilt gnaw on my aking Thought; — to wish for Madness, and yet Sense remain, was Misery! was Horror, sure, without a Name! A thousand Times in a Day I was about to put an End to Life, and all its Weight of Anguish: Nor was it Reason or Religion, but merely the Consideration that Death wou'd take from me all Power of hearing what became of *Lyfander*, that preserv'd me.

Thus did I live, if such a State can be call'd Life, till the Day of *Lyfander's* Marriage; but when I heard that, imagine you behold a Wretch in the most raging Fit of Lunacy, and it may give you some Idea, though but a faint one, of what I then appear'd:

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appear'd: I tore my Cloaths, my Face, my Hair, threw myself on the Floor, beat my Breast, made the House ring with echoing Shrieks and Lamentations, and was scarce restrain'd by my Nurse from running in this Manner to the Church where the Ceremony was perform'd; and it was but when I had no longer Strength to rage, that partly by Force, and partly by Persuasion, she got me into Bed. The Violence of my Agitations threw me into a Fever; but though I would take nothing but what I was compell'd to, and committed Extravagancies in this Illness enough to have kill'd twenty of a much stronger Constitution than myself, yet I could not die: In spite of the Malignity of the Distemper, in spite even of *myself*, I recover'd. But not all the bodily Indisposition I had endur'd, had been able to weaken the Passions of my Soul: I still lov'd, and still despair'd. — My Thoughts were always with *Lyfander*, and pursu'd him every where, even to the bridal Bed, that Grave where all my Hopes were buried! My Nurse's House happening, unluckily to stand in a Street pretty near that in which *Lyfander* liv'd, as soon as I had Strength to walk about my Chamber, I had the Mortification from my Window to behold him and *Semanthe*, now his Wife, pass by in their Chariot almost every Day. You may believe this Sight gave no small Addition to the Horrors of my Despair: But I will not pretend to repeat what it was I felt whenever these grating Objects met my Eyes; it shall suffice to say, 'twas more than I cou'd bear; and I resolv'd to rid myself of what I *then* endur'd, without any Apprehensions of what Futurity might give. Death was my determin'd Care: But in what Manner I should apply it was now my only Study; and, after a long Debate in my Mind, *Poison* was the Means I fix'd on, as being not only the most decent, but also the most private Way I could perform this Deed of Desperation; for was unwilling the World should be sensible of what

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what I had done; and when I was no more, preserve my Shame still flagrant with those scurril Ditties, which Actions of the kind I was about to do, are always Themes for. I took care to conceal my Intentions from my Nurse; and that she might be the less watchful over me, began to counterfeit a Chearfulness, which Heaven knows was far distant from my Heart. The poor Woman was overjoy'd to find me, as she thought, so much more easy than I had been; and I went out one Day, unsuspected, to procure the fatal Drugs. I had Recourse to an Apothecary who had been us'd to make up Medicines for our Family; and because I knew how scrupulous People of that Profession are oblig'd to be, I told him, I had a little favourite Dog, which by some Accident was run mad, and having made use of a thousand Experiments for a Cure for him in vain, and not enduring to have him destroy'd any other Way, I wou'd have something to give him, to put an End to his Misery in the most gentle Manner I could; something of a sleeping Potion, I said, which by Degrees shou'd seize upon the Seats of Life, and give a sure, but easy Death. The Man look'd on me with a good deal of Surprise, and, as I thought, more Penetration than I desir'd he should have; but, after a little Pause, went about mixing the Composition. I was very well pleased to think I had so artfully deceiv'd him, and came home with the Physick, which I design'd should make a perfect Cure of all my Miseries. As I was going to drink it, I began to think I cou'd not leave the World in Peace, without a Farewel to my unjust, but still too dear *Lyfander*; and taking up some Paper, writ to him these Lines:

To

To the Dear Ruiner of my Soul
and Body.

AS my Passion for you was built on a more lasting Foundation than that of your's to me, so not all your Cruelty can have Power to shake it: I must be your's, though you cease to desire I shou'd be so; and since I cannot hope, nay, now you are another's, dare not with any future Testimonies of my Affection should be pleasing, I take the only Means to rid you of the Trouble: A Draught of Poison stands before me; and the Moment I conclude this Letter, I take my Journey to that World, whence there is no Return: — What will be my Portion there I know not; but I am sure of this, that if departed Souls have any Intelligence of what's acted here, your Pity for my Fate will mitigate the sharpest Torments. A tender Sigh sometimes, not even my Rival wou'd deny; and perhaps, a Time may come, when you shall own I merited much more. I do not, however, wish you shou'd be touch'd too deeply with Remorse: — You are too dear to me, for me to desire to give you Pain. Remember me, if you can, with some little Softness; — make not my Sufferings the Subject of your Ridicule, nor seem pleas'd if you hear others do so; and whenever my Want of Beauty, Wit, or any other Charm, rises as an Evidence against me, let my exalted Tenderness still ballance that Deficiency, and reflect, that as I have liv'd, so now I die, my Dear, Dear Lysander.

Only your's,

CLEOMIRA.

I kept my Word, indeed; for as soon as I had seal'd this up, I drank the Ingredients I had brought home with me: — I drank it without the least Alarm, or any of those Apprehensions, which so terrify the Minds of most People at the Approach of Death.

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Death, so much had Despair hardened my Heart, and stupified my Reason. In above an Hour, either the Draught *it self*, or the Force of *my Imagination* that it must be so, operated so strongly through my Veins, that I grew exceeding sick; and fearing the Effects wou'd come before I had settled those Affairs I had in my Head, I call'd hastily for the good old Nurse. It was almost Midnight, and she was in Bed; and believing I had been so too, was not a little frightened when she came into my Chamber, and found me dress'd as I had been all Day, and with something in my Countenance, as she said, of a Horror impossible to be express'd. I sent for you (said I) to take my everlasting Leave, --- to thank you for the faithful Services I have received from you, and to make what Recompence my lessen'd Circumstances have left me Power to do. The poor Creature star'd in my Face all the Time I was speaking; but the Astonishment she was in made her either incapable of understanding me, or took away the Power of answering. Be not surpris'd, (resum'd I,) I tell you this Night, --- I know not but this *Hour* is the last of my Life: --- Therefore, while I have Voice to utter the Meanings of my Soul, I charge you be attentive, and perform my last Requests. She certainly thought my Griefs had turn'd my Brain; and hastily interrupting me, as I spoke these Words, For Heaven's sake, Madam, (said she,) give not way to the Suggestions of your Melancholy: You are now, God be prais'd, pretty well recover'd from an Illness in which we had just Reason to despair of you: --- You are now, as it were, risen from the Grave, and the signal Deliverance shews that you are destin'd for happier Days than those you yet have seen. --- Ah! do not then (continued she, with Tears in her Eyes) endeavour to disappoint the Designs of your all-wise Preserver, by indulging Grief to prey upon your Senses for the Loss of an unworthy Person, whom, at your Return of Reason you must scorn. I could not suffer her to proceed

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ceed in this Manner, but cutting her off from what she was going to say, No more, (cried I,) if by an ill-tim'd and unmannerly Zeal you would not forfeit all that good Opinion your Fidelity and Obedience has hitherto inspir'd: --- Once more I tell you, that I cannot, --- will not live: --- Death is already busy at my Heart; and, if I make not haste, may rob me of the only Wish I now can form, and you of the Glory of serving to the last a Mistress, who, if she had the Power, would more express her Gratitude. --- Therefore, in few Words, by all that Truth and Honesty which I believe you possess'd of, I conjure you to deliver a Letter you will find on the Table into *Lysander's* Hands, the Moment I expire,--- to tell him that his Inconstancy was my Death, and to relate the Manner of it in the most moving Terms you can invent. This is all I have to ask, or to command. --- As to my Funeral, order it as you please; but let me not be laid too near my Parents, lest my guilty Ashes shou'd disturb the sacred Repose of theirs.--- All that remains of my broken Fortune, after I am laid in the Earth, is yours. Though I spoke this with all the Solemnity imaginable, it was to little Purpose; she still took it for the Effects of my Melancholy, and began to resume her Dissuasions from letting such sad Thoughts get the better of my Reason; and I was forc'd to tell her what I had done, before I could make her believe I was in Danger of Death. But never did Amazement and real Grief appear more lively than in the Face of this poor Wretch, at what I told her. At first she was entirely mute, and when she had Power to speak, her Words were nothing but Exclamations. Then, on a sudden, thinking they were fruitless, was running for a Physician, for a Divine, and raising the whole Town for my Preservation; nor cou'd any Thing I should have said, have prevented her, if my Strength had not prevail'd to force her into a Chair, and holding her there, oblig'd her to hear me tell her, That the Poison I had taken was not

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not of a Nature to be expell'd, or if it were, had now lain too long in me to be depriv'd of its Operation: Nay, (said I,) put the Case that what I had done, shou'd by any Means that I shou'd be compell'd to use be render'd fruitless, --- not all the World shou'd force me to live another Day: --- If I cannot die the Way I chuse, still I will *some* Way; --- If not by Poison, there are Knives, or Cords: --- My Garters may be my Executioners: --- Or if deny'd these Instruments, you cannot hinder me from strangling myself with my own Hands, or dashing out my Brains against the Wall: --- To those *resolv'd*, Death always is at Call. I spoke these Words with a real Design to do as I said; and if she had got Liberty to have brought any Persons in to restrain me, I had certainly that Moment taken some unfailing Method to prevent any Thing they cou'd have done to save me. But with these, and the like Speeches, at last I perswaded her to content herself with *lamenting* my Desperation, without endeavouring to do any Thing to *remove* it. And having convinc'd her of my Obstinacy to die, to spare the Infamy of Self-Murder, she promis'd me to keep the Deed conceal'd, and give out I died of an Apoplexy. But I thought I shou'd never have prevail'd on her to carry the Letter to *Lyfander*: Her Abhorrence to him, as the Author of all my Misfortunes, and now of my Death, was so great, that she assur'd me the Task of dying with me wou'd be far less severe than the beholding such a Monster: But my Tears and repeated Entreaties at last overcame all her Scruples, and I engag'd an Oath from her, (for I wou'd not in that Case trust her Promise,) that she wou'd in the Morning see him, and say all that I requir'd. In a very little Time after I had brought her into the Disposition I desir'd, I found a prodigious Heaviness, like that, indeed, of Death, seize on my Spirits; and making no doubt but that the fatal Moment was at hand, with my Nurse's Assistance, (though, poor Soul, she was in too great an Agony to be able to afford me much,)

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I got my self undress'd, and put to Bed, where I had not lain long before I lost all Sense of every Thing: --- *Lyfander's* Charms, --- his Cruelty, --- my Ruin and Despair, were now no more remember'd! --- Oh! if one were sure to enjoy that Tranquility in a *real* Death, that I did in my *imaginary* one, none wou'd survive their Happiness! At my return to Thought, that is, when I was loos'd from the Bands of Sleep, for it was no more which had bound down my Senses, I was in a Consternation impossible to be express'd: --- I look'd on myself, then round the Room, and I believe 'twou'd have been pleasant enough, if any body had been Witness of it, to have observ'd the Oddness of my Behaviour at my first waking: I remember'd very well what had pass'd before I went to Bed, and cou'd not reconcile so seeming a Contradiction, as that I shou'd be still in a World I believ'd I had taken such effectual Measures to be freed from. As I was in this Dilemma, my Nurse came into the Chamber, not with her Eyes o'erflow'd with Tears, and wringing her Hands, as she had done the Night before, but with all the Marks of a most perfect Satisfaction, and kneeling down by the Bedside, testify'd her Joy in most fervent Thanksgivings to that Divine Power, which had so graciously been pleas'd to disappoint the unnatural Purpose of my Heart. I cou'd not forbear interrupting her Ejaculations by some wild sort of Enquiries, how I came to be still living; which she presently satisfy'd me in these Words: When I had left you, (said she,) in all Appearance dead, I began to consider of the Promise you had oblig'd me to make; and it being near Morning, got myself ready to go with your Letter, resolving to take no Notice of your Death to my Family till my Return. After I had discharg'd that unwelcome Errand, I found a Man waiting at home to speak with me; and he told me, the chief of it was to enquire if a Lady who lodg'd here was well; and then nam'd *you*: I was too much confounded at the Question to be able
to

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to answer him without trembling and faltering in my Speech, though, as well as I cou'd, I said I hop'd you were well; --- that I left you so last Night. I wish (resum'd he, taking me aside) she may continue so. Then, Madam, he told me he was the Apothecary from whom you had demanded Poison; but suspecting you design'd it for some other Use than what you pretended, and fearing if he shou'd deny, you might procure it from some other, he had deceiv'd you with an *Opiate*, which cou'd be no way prejudicial to the Health of the Person that took it, though it wou'd hold the Senses in a much deeper and longer Sleep than what was natural. --- He said also, That he had caus'd you to be watch'd home, to the End that he might relate the Truth to those about you, if any Thing of what he imagin'd shou'd happen. I was so impatient to know what *Lyfander* had said, since I found she had been with him, that I cou'd not give myself much Time to reflect on what she told me concerning the Apothecary; but I found her willing to evade the repeating the Manner of his Behaviour, and guess'd by *that* he was inhuman to the last. --- What, (said I) was he not shock'd to hear I died for him? --- If I cou'd believe, that after so fatal a Proof of Love he cou'd persist in his Barbarity, I shou'd rejoice my Purpose was defeated, and would live to scorn him. --- If you are in earnest, (interrupted she,) and can, indeed, continue in a Resolution so truly noble, I will inform you of all. Which after my assuring her I wou'd do, she went on in this Manner: I gave your Letter to him, (said she,) and after looking it carelessly over, --- Your Mistress sure is mad, (cry'd he, with an Air of Contempt,) I long have thought her so; and the romantick Stuff she has writ me here, confirms it. Indeed, Madam, (continued the good Creature,) I had scarce Power to refrain fying in his Face; but though my Hands forbore any Indignities, I gave my Tongue free Scope; and when I had told him, --- nay, swore, (as well I might, for firmly I believ'd it,) that you were really dead,

dead, I call'd him every Name I cou'd invent, of base, perfidious, and deceitful; but he seem'd as little to regard the Fury I was in, as the News I brought him, and only saying, --- If she be dead the Letter requires no Answer, therefore be gone, and cease your Clamour; but not finding I was very hasty to do as he bid me, for methought it was some little Satisfaction to upbraid this Monster, he call'd one of his Servants to turn me out of Doors, and walk'd from me as unconcerned as though I had brought him an Account of the most indifferent Affair that cou'd have happen'd. I was too well satisfied in the Integrity of this good old Woman, to doubt the Truth of what she said; and it was now that I began to feel that Resentment, which by a thousand Barbarities he had long before deserved. And, after some little Struggles between departing Tenderness and growing Hate; --- 'Tis done, (said I,) *Reason*, at last, has gain'd a Conquest over all that *Softness* which has hitherto betray'd me to Contempt.--- Now I will live, and *Love* alone shall die.--- Nurse brought so many and well-grounded Arguments to strengthen me in this Resolution, and express'd her Meaning in a Manner so much beyond what could be expected from her, that I have often thought she was that Moment inspir'd by Heaven to assist my Weakness. In short, I gave the Thoughts of *Death* entirely over. I cou'd not endure, however, to appear publicly in the World again; and as *Lysander* believ'd me dead, I was willing every Body else shou'd do so too: I order'd a *Will* to be drawn according to Law, in which I made Nurse my *Heir* and sole *Executrix*; and she has perform'd every Thing I desir'd with such Exactness and Fidelity, that not a Relation or Acquaintance has the least Notion of my being living. It was she who heard of the Convenience of this House for boarding in; but I wou'd not let her come to make any Agreement for me, because she might chance to be known, and consequently the Person she recommended guess'd at. Since the

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Time of my being here, she manages my little Fortune, receives the Income of it when due, and gives me an Account of it every Quarter; which is all the Business I have to do in this uneasy World. Thus, Madam, have I given you a faithful Account of the Causes which induc'd me to this Retirement; and I believe, you will own that they are such as merit no less than my whole Life's Contrition. For, as Mr. Waller very elegantly expresses it,

*Our Passions gone, and Reason in her Throne,
Amaz'd we see the Mischiefs we have done!*

Though *Belinda* had conceiv'd the highest Esteem and Friendship imaginable for this fair Unfortunate, and was willing to offer every Thing in her Power for her Consolation, yet she cou'd not disapprove the Justice of her Lamentations, or the Resolution she had taken of concealing herself. So much of the Night was taken up in the RECLUSE's History, that *Belinda* was oblig'd to defer her's till the next Day; but the other engag'd her to come into her Chamber early in the Morning, and, as soon as Breakfast was over, demanded the Performance of her Promise; which she readily comply'd with, and struggling with some Sighs, which her aking Heart sent forth on recollecting the Passages she was about to utter, began her Relation in this Manner.

The Story of BELINDA.

I Cannot, (said she,) boast either of a Family, or any natural or acquir'd Endowments, which cou'd entitle me to those Hopes the lovely and accomplish'd *Gleomira* might reasonably depend on: My Father was, indeed, a Gentleman; and if his Estate was not the greatest, yet it was superior to most Commons, who had taken no other Measures to enlarge their Possessions than what was consistent with *Honesty*, and that tranquil State of Life, which,

I be-

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I believe, he wou'd not have forsook to have been Master of both *Indies*: And though my Education was only such as the Country affords, yet, had I follow'd those Precepts which my Infancy was taught, it had been sufficient to have restrain'd me from doing any Thing which cou'd draw on me the Contempt of the World. I had the Misfortune to lose both my Parents within a Year of one another; but my Father, (who was the longest Survivor,) had, a little before his Death, provided me a Husband, a Gentleman who long had lov'd me, and who was, indeed, deserving of a much better Match: His Person was extremely graceful and well-turn'd; his Behaviour affable to all, and complaisant as far as *Sincerity* wou'd permit; his Solidity of Judgment and sound Reasoning surpriz'd those of twice his Years; and though he had a peculiar Sweetness of Disposition, which made it impossible for him to be an *Enemy* to any one, yet was it temper'd with a due Regard to that Principle of Honour which forbids any *Friendship* with the vicious Part of Mankind, or for any private End or Interest to pretend it. *Virtue* and *Wit*, though in Rags, never fail'd to excite his highest Praises and most zealous Esteem; and *Folly* and *Baseness*, though adorn'd with Grandeur, his Contempt and open Detestation. It was impossible for a Heart so entirely unprepossess'd as mine *then* was, to make any Objection to a Person such as I have describ'd, especially when recommended by a Father, who I knew tenderly lov'd me, and was most watchful for my Happiness; but as I had no *Repugnance*, so also I had no extraordinary *Satisfaction* in the Thoughts of this Match: I felt no Hopes, no Fears, no Wishes, no Impatience, nor knew what 'twas to be *uneasy* or *transported*. When I saw *Worthly*, (for that was the Name of this excellent Man,) I was well enough pleas'd, indeed; but when I saw him not, I was the same: In fine, every Thing was indifferent to me; and had this Insensibility continu'd, I had liv'd one of the most contented Women in the World. Every Thing

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Thing being concluded on, a Day was fix'd for the Celebration of our Marriage; but on the sudden Death of my Father, which happen'd about a Week before, for Decency's-sake, it was put off to a longer Time: Nor cou'd *Worthly*, (ardent Lover, as all his *Actions* spoke him,) say any Thing to the contrary. He constantly visited me every Day, and I looking on him as a Man ordain'd by Heaven, and him who had the Disposal of me, for my Husband, allow'd him all the Freedom of Conversation imaginable. The Alteration which the Death of my Father had made in our Family, gave him an Opportunity of proving his Love and Generosity in a Manner which justly render'd him very dear to my *Esteem*, (Oh! wou'd to Heaven it had to my *Affection* too!) but I have since found there is an Infinity of Distance between Love and Friendship. My Father, little suspecting he was so near his End, had made no *Will*, and being possess'd of scarce any *personal* Estate, and the *real* descending to my Brother, then a Student in the University, it was generally fear'd among our Relations, that myself and younger Sister wou'd be entirely Portionless. This Discourse soon reach'd *Worthly's* Ears; and he came to me one Day with a more than ordinary Satisfaction in his Countenance, to tell me, That nothing cou'd have happen'd more lucky for his Wishes, than this Means of testifying to me and the whole World, that it was my *Love* alone he was ambitious of; and that he was so far from desiring my Brother shou'd make good any Thing of what my Father had promis'd, that he wou'd not be depriv'd of the Glory of proving himself not altogether unworthy my Regard, by marrying me without a Fortune, to receive with me the Treasure of an Empire. I must have been void both of Gratitude and common Sense, if I had not acknowledg'd this Behaviour to have been generous above the Rank of ordinary Lovers; especially, when I consider'd it cou'd be none of those idle Compliments which Men are often full of, when they think we have no Occasion

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sion to make use of their Service. I knew *Worthly's* Temper too well to suspect the Sincerity of what he said, and knew also, that he was too well acquainted with my Brother's Character to expect any Thing from him. He was when he left our House extremely Wild and Thoughtless, wholly addicted to his Pleasures, and seem'd so little inclinable to any solid Reflections for the Good of his Family, or himself, indeed, that it was the universal Discourse of the Country, that he would make but an ill Use of his Patrimony: But he disappointed the Belief of every Body; and when he came from the University, (as he did soon after my Father's Death, to take Possession, he being more than of Age,) he made it appear that Learning is the best Polisher of the *Principles*, as well as *Manners* of those who apply themselves seriously to it. He settled the Affairs of the Family in a Fashion beyond what cou'd have been hop'd; and having heard of my intended Marriage with *Worthly*, and what my Father design'd to give me, said he wou'd be far from contradicting the Will of so good a Parent, tho' not compell'd to it by any Form of Law; and sending for a Scrivener, not only made me Mistress of the Fortune which had been promis'd, but bound himself to give my Sister the same, whenever she shou'd Marry, or come of Age; and because there was no ready Money left, he made over the Estate to pay it, reserving only to himself a Competency to maintain him at the University, whither he soon went back, and designs to continue some Years. My Brother's Generosity did not, however, lessen my Obligations to *Worthly*; my Esteem for him encreas'd daily, and he had, indeed, so many excellent Qualities, that it was impossible, but the more one knew him, the more one shou'd find to admire: In fine, all that I knew of Love was his; nor had I the least Notion, there was any Thing farther in that Passion, than what he had inspir'd me with. --- Happy had I been never to have been undeceiv'd! But my ill Fate decreed it otherwise, and sad Experience soon

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inform'd me that the Effects of *Love* are not *Tranquility* and *Ease*.

Not having been at any publick Place, (except Church,) since the Death of my Father, *Worthly* wou'd needs perswade me to go in his Coach to see a famous Horse-Race, which was to be run a few Miles distant from the Place where we liv'd. There was a prodigious Concourse of People, and great Part of them of the best Fashion in the Country round about; the Sight gave us a great deal of Diversion; and when it was over, *Worthly* conducted myself and Sister, (for I took her with me,) to a House, where there was a noble Collation prepar'd for our Entertainment; and in this, as in every Thing else, he testify'd the Pride he took in obliging me. As we were returning home, the Coachman having drank too plentifully, drove in such a furious Manner, (in spite of his Master's often calling to him to take Care,) that we were over-turn'd. None of us were hurt: But this Accident was the Occasion of a Misfortune much worse than any Thing that cou'd have happen'd by the Fall. A Gentleman, who was riding the same Way, and saw all that pass'd, came up to us, and alighting from his Horse, made us several Compliments on the Occasion, and, perceiving the Condition our Coachman was in, entreated *Worthly* to accept of a Servant he had with him, who, he said, had often drove a Coach, and understood it very well. The Fright that my Sister and I were in made *Worthly* gladly accept of the Offer; and immediately the young Man, by his Master's Command, chang'd Seats with the Coachman. All the Time of our little Journey, the obliging Stranger rode by the Coach-side, and entertain'd us with a World of Gallantry; for, besides the Charms of his Person, which nothing sure could ever equalize, his Manner of Address had something in it so inexpressibly engaging, that had *Cleomira* seen him, *Lysander* wou'd have appear'd less lovely. The RECLUSE cou'd not forbear shaking her Head and sighing at these Words.

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as believing it impossible for any Man to be possess'd of Graces, which cou'd obscure those of her *Lysander*; but she wou'd not interrupt the other by entring into an Argument, which 'twas probable they shou'd not easily agree upon, and *Belinda* went on thus: *Worthly* (continu'd she) was infinitely charm'd with his Conversation, and gave me to understand, when we came near home, that I cou'd do no less, in return to the Civilities he had shew'd us, than invite him in. My Complaisance for him was sufficient to have made me yield to his Desire, in a much greater Matter; but, alas! I granted this with a Pleasure, which, at that Time, I knew not the Meaning of, nor once imagin'd, that from the Wit and Beauty of this lovely Unknown I had drawn in an Infection at my Eyes and Ears, which, mixing with my whole Mass of Blood, was to poison all the Quiet of my future Days: I cannot tell you what 'twas I felt, while in his Presence, but it was a Mixture of Delight and Pain, a kind of racking Joy, and pleasing Anguish. He stay'd not very long at our House, *Worthly* was impatient to have him at his own, that he might, in a Fashion which he wou'd not take the Freedom to use in ours, requite the Civilities we had receiv'd from him on the Road; and it was not till I was left alone, and had Leisure for Reflection, that I found myself unhappy enough to feel for this Stranger, what *Worthly's* constant Assiduity, and my Knowledge of his many Virtues, never cou'd inspire. I suffer'd many Conflicts on the first Discovery that it really was *Love*, which so suddenly, and without Reason, had taken Possession of my Soul: My just Sense of the Obligations I had to *Worthly*, and my Engagements to him, (from which I cou'd not without both Ingratitude and Dishonour recede,) and my wild Passion for a Man, who, perhaps, might never regard me with any Thing more than an Indifference; --- a Man, who 'twas likely might be already married, or prepossess'd with a more deserving Object; --- a Man, whose Temper, Principles, and Circumstances,

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cumstances, were altogether unknown to me, fill'd me at once with Shame, Remorse, Confusion, and Despair. My Mind in this Disorder, 'twou'd be needless to say it was impossible for Sleep to enter my Eyes: I pass'd the Night in a Manner vastly different from all I had ever known before; nor did the Day bring any more Tranquility. In the Afternoon, *Worthly*, according to Custom, came to visit me; but, alas! his Presence was now no longer welcome, nor cou'd all his good Qualities have render'd him supportable, had not his whole Discourse been of the too lovely Stranger. He told me, that he had been inform'd by himself of all his Circumstances; that he was a Baronet, his Name *Sir Thomas Courtal*; that having made the Tour of *Europe*, he thought his Travels wou'd not be compleat, unless he cou'd be able to give as good an Account of the Kingdom he was born in, as of others; and to that End, was proceeding in his Progress thro' every Country in which there was any Thing rare or valuable to be seen. He added to this Relation, so many Encomiums on the Graces of his Person, the Charms of his Wit, and and the seeming Sweetness of his Disposition, that had I not been already too much prepossess'd in his Favour, what he said was enough to have made me so. Presuming on my Interest with you, (said this unsuspecting Lover,) I have engag'd, that you shall give me leave to bring him to wait on you sometimes, while this Part of the Country is happy in his Presence; which I hope (continu'd he looking tenderly on me) will be long enough to see me blest in the Title of your Husband. O God! with what Emotions did my Bosom swell, when he pronounc'd these Words! a thousand Times I was about to lay open all the Weakness of my Soul, and warn him of so dangerous a Guest; but Shame as often depriv'd me of the Power: --- Yes, I protest, it gave me a Concern I cannot well express, to see this generous, this undesigning Man, thus lay a Snare for the Destruction of his own Hopes: Yet, how cou'd I avoid it,

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it, without making a Confession too shocking for my Modesty, or his Passion, to be able to sustain? In fine, I having said nothing to oppose it, he brought him the next Day to visit me, and they became so intimate in a little Time, that he scarce ever came without him. O what a Trial was this for a Heart so inexperience'd as mine! How did I struggle to repel my daily-encreasing Wishes? And how strenuously did I endeavour to out-balance *Courtal's* enchanting Graces, by the solid-Perfections of the other? But all in vain; the tow'ring Flame grew higher by my Attempts to quell it, and a little Time convinc'd me, that Almighty Love despises all Controul. *Worthly's* continual Sollicitations for the Celebration of our Marriage, render'd him more disagreeable; and the Trouble he put me to in finding Excuses to delay it, made the Sight of him intollerable: He had too much Penetration, not to discover there was an Alteration in my Behaviour; but having never receiv'd Testimonies of any Thing more than my Esteem, imagin'd it proceeded only from the little Inclination he had always found in me to change my Condition; and redoubled his Pressures in such a Manner, as made me stand in need of much more Artifice than I was Mistress of, to put him off, without letting him into the Secret of my Reason for it. To heighten my Aversion, and strengthen my Obstinacy in refusing him, I had of late observ'd in the charming *Courtal's* Eyes a certain Languishment they were not us'd to wear; I often heard him sigh, observ'd him to look pale and trembling, when, on any Occasion, he touch'd my Hand: Symptoms which I now began to know were infallible Tokens of a Tenderness, far beyond that which springs from bare Esteem. And while I flatter'd my fond Wishes with a Belief, that I was secretly belov'd by him, I began insensibly to hate the other, whom I look'd upon as the only Bar 'twixt me and all the Joys this World cou'd give. Tho' *Worthly* was one of the most obsequious Lovers that ever was, yet he was too eager to brook a Delay,

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lay, for which he cou'd assign no Reason; and finding me still more and more averse to any Discourse of Marriage, he solicited all my Relations and Acquaintance to speak to me, and learn the Cause, if possible, why I shou'd now refuse what (if my Father's Death had not deferr'd) had been granted with my free Consent many Months before. I suffer'd a vast deal of Persecution from all those People he had engag'd in his Interest; and I know not what the unanswerable Arguments they pleaded in his Favour might not at last have perswaded me to, if he had not (O ill-directed and unlucky Choice!) employ'd even his ador'd Rival too in this Affair. I was one Day in my Chamber musing, and full of unsettled Resolutions, when I was told that *Courtal* was below: His very Name alarm'd me; but when I came down, and found he was alone, 'tis impossible to guess at my Surprise! He easily perceiv'd it in my Countenance; and approaching me with the most humble and submissive Air, A Guest, Madam, (said he,) of so little Merit as the unhappy *Courtal* wou'd have small Reason to hope a Welcome *here*, if his Presumption were not authoriz'd by him, who, blest with the Divine *Belinda's* Love, knows the way to obtain Pardon for himself and me. --- From *Worthly*, Madam, (continu'd he, perceiving I was silent,) the fortunate *Worthly*, I am sent to tell you how much he languishes under the Impossibility of waiting on you this Evening, and to assure you, (if you can doubt it,) that tho' unlucky Affairs detain him from your Presence, his Soul and all his Wishes are with you. Tho' I was prodigiously confounded to find that *Worthly* had engag'd him to this Visit, yet I was much more so at his Manner of telling it me: But after I had desir'd him to sit, Any Friend of *Worthly's* (answer'd I,) shall always find Welcome from *Belinda*: But, I think, so much is owing to the vast Merits of Sir *Thomas Courtal*, that there can be no need of any second Name to introduce him any where. I design'd these Words no other than a Compliment;

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ment; but the Confusion with which I spoke them, gave him too much Reason to believe I had a farther Meaning; and looking on me with Eyes which seem'd to read my Soul, ---- O God! (said he,) what sweet Enchantment do those Words contain! The powerful Spells disclose an opening Heaven to my ravish'd View! and wrapp'd with Joys immortal, make me forget the Hell of Misery I am doom'd too! --- Then, after a little Pause, and venting two or three Sighs, which seem'd so vehement as though at each his Heart were rent in sunder, Pardon, Madam, (resum'd he,) the Violence of a sudden Transport, which some delusive Hopes that Moment fir'd me with, and made me neglect the Business which alone has given me the Boldness of waiting on you. I felt, all the Time he was speaking, Motions, which I know not how to account for; I have already told you that I had discover'd, or fancy'd that I had discover'd, by some Looks and Words, which seem'd to be unguarded, that he lov'd me; and though I desir'd nothing so passionately as to be assur'd he did so, yet I dreaded the Eclaircissement, and began to tremble with Fear that he should say something which I was altogether unprepared to answer: I have often reflected since how silly my inward Perturbations made me seem: *Courtal* must certainly guess from what Source the Disorders he perceiv'd in my Countenance proceeded, or believe me to be extremely wanting in Conversation; and I was so ambitious of appearing amiable in his Eyes, that I know not if I wou'd not have chose he should be sensible of the Truth, rather than impute my Behaviour to any natural Defect: But whatever his Thoughts were, he eas'd my Confusion, by immediately falling into a Discourse of *Worthly*. He gave him Praises, which, tho' not more than he deserv'd, were more than I was willing to hear, at least, from the Mouth that spoke them; and than began to tell me how ill the Impatience of his Love made him brook my delaying to give him a Happiness, which he had so much Cause
to

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to hope would long since have been compleated; and that he begg'd I would assign some Period to his Sufferings, that he the better might be enabled to endure them. If before I was alarm'd at the Apprehension of *Courtal's* entertaining me in another Manner, I was now ten Times more so that he did not: --- It stung me to the Soul to find, that when he had so favourable an Opportunity to discover his Sentiments, he should employ it in a Theme, which (if he had those Inclinations that I had flatter'd myself I had inspir'd,) must be so disagreeable to his own Desires. My Fears now turn'd to Indignation! I rag'd to think my Wishes had deceiv'd me, and half despis'd him for his Insensibility! I wonder (said I, with an Air, which I believe, had a good deal of Contempt in it) that *Worthly* shou'd take the Measures he does: --- Does he think to tease me into Compliance? --- and can he imagine, that any Thing he can say, or the Persons he employs, will influence so far, as to make me grant what is not consistent with my Inclinations? --- I am not dispos'd to marry, --- at least, as yet; and if I never shou'd be so, he ought not to expect I should do a Violence to my *own* Humour, to pleasure *his*. These, and the like ridiculous Expressions, which my Vanity, or my Love, or both, drew from me, were sufficient to let *Courtal* see how little real Tenderness I had for his Rival; and, doubtless, encourag'd him to make the Declaration he presently did. Ah, Madam! (said he,) you are but little sensible what the burning Impatience of a Lover's Wishes make him suffer, --- what strong Convulsions, --- what soul-rending Pangs invade the Breast, which throbs with doubtful Expectation! --- For my Part, --- could I, like *Worthly*, hope, --- as all, who know you, must, like him, adore, I shou'd be less enduring far! --- Those lovely Eyes shou'd ne'er have Leave to close, or view another Object but myself, --- nor Night, nor Day would I be absent: --- I'd follow wheresoe'er you went, --- and with imploring, dying Looks, --- with softening Tears,

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Tears, --- with Groans, and all the natural Eloquence of moving Passion, hang on your Feet, and grasp those happy Garments, till Coldness, Coyness, and Reserve, was melted down; --- and your whole Soul was Tenderness and Pity. You might be mistaken, (reply'd I briskly;) for if I did not *love*, such a Behaviour would make me *hate*. True, Madam, (resum'd he, holding down his Head, and sighing,) I know from the Unlov'd all Proofs would be unwelcome; and 'tis that Knowledge has deter'd me from discovering what I feel; --- else had my Eyes and Tongue, e'er now, disclos'd my Soul, and told *Belinda* she engros'd it all; --- but hopeless, --- meritless, I have in secret born the fest'ring Wound; nor durst implore my fair Physician's Aid, lest, instead of *Balm*, she should apply a *Corrosive*. --- Even this, perhaps, (continu'd he, taking one of my Hands, and eagerly kissing it,) you would think too great a Recompence for the eternal Loss of my Repose. Tho' this Declaration would have prodigiously disorder'd me before, yet being made at a Time when I had just given over either the Hopes or the Fears of hearing any such Thing, it confounded me much more: I knew not what to say, nor how to look; I could not *repe*l, and was unwilling to *encourage*; but, at last, thinking it best to take the middle Course, I affected to turn his Behaviour into Merriment; and, with as much Gaiety as I could put on, I dare swear (said I) there is no Danger of your losing your Repose for any Woman in the World: --- You have too much *Wisdom* to be much in *Love*; and most of your Sex have too much *Wit*, and too little *good Nature* not to despise the Effects of that Passion wherever you perceive them. --- How, Madam, (interrupted he,) such Words, coming from a Mouth like *yours*, carry a Severity in them more cruel than any Thing I could apprehend from so angelick a Composition: --- While you tell me I have *Wisdom*, and that I know not *Love*, you give the greatest Proof you can, that you think me an *Ideot*; for to adore

Belinda

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Belinda is sure the highest *Wisdom*; and to be inflexible of her Charms, is the last Degree of *Folly* and *Stupidity*. --- Ah! wou'd to Heaven (continued he sighing) it were as much in my Power to influence you to Compassion for my Sufferings, as it is to convince you of the Reality of them. I never doubted your Gallantry, (answered I, scarce able to retain any Part of that Humour I had assum'd;) but if I had, you give me now a sufficient Testimony of it, in so artfully turning the Discourse we were upon, which indeed was too serious to be pleasing, into a *Raillery* much more entertaining. --- He wou'd not suffer me to proceed, but falling on his Knees before me, and looking up in my Face with a Tenderness unutterable, O hold, (cried he,) lovely Insulter! give not to the most Almighty Truth a breaking, --- bleeding Heart, e'er yet sent forth, so injurious an Epiphēt: --- By Heaven, --- by all that Man adores, --- by all we are taught to hope, to fear, or wish, you are dearer to my Soul than Health, than Grandeur, Knowledge, Light, Life, or my eternal Peace; --- than every Thing that Language gives a Name to: --- But I may spare these Protestations (rejoin'd he, after a little Pause,) too well do those enchanting Eyes trace their own Power, --- even now they penetrate, they pierce my Breast, and read much more, oh! infinitely more, than I can say. --- He would have gone on, but the Tread of somebody coming down Stairs, oblig'd him to break off, and reliev'd me from a Perplexity I know not how I should have got through. It was my Sister who came into the Room, just as he had risen from the Posture he was in; but the Confusion that she perceiv'd in both our Faces, made her (as she since told me) guess what sort of Conversation he had entertain'd me with; and, believing it would be a little agreeable to me that he should have an Opportunity to renew it, never left us while he stay'd. He could not, indeed, after she came in, express his Sentiments any farther by *Words*, but *Looks*, which I already too well understood

understood; explain'd his Meaning; and certainly, tho' at that Time I knew it not, met with a Return too kind from mine. Just as he was taking his Leave, he got the Liberty to say softly, --- O divine *Belinda*! remember me; --- Pardon, and pity me. --- Alas! 'twas I had only need of *Pity*; for never did any Creature pass a Night in greater Inquietudes than I did the succeeding one: --- My Engagements to *Worthly*, and the Impossibility of breaking them, without rendring my self odious to all who knew me; --- my already furious Passion for *Courtal*, and the little Assurance I had of the Sincerity of his; --- my Ingratitude for the *one*, and Weakness for the *other*, shock'd all that was noble and generous in me, and made me incapable of Ease: I had *all to fear*, *nothing to hope*; nor could I form an Aim, which, if obtain'd, could give me perfect Happiness. If I should marry *Worthly* (said I to myself, how wretched must I be? condemn'd to loath'd Embraces, and the detested Task of forc'd Civility; --- by painful Duty restrain'd from even the Wish of better Fortune, yet *Inclination* still at War with *Virtue*, guilty and innocent at once, and miserable in both: --- Or, should I indulge my Passion in the too-charming *Courtal's* dear Society, could I expect Content? Even in his Arms, my Breach of Promise, and Ingratitude to *Worthly*, his Despair, and the just Censures of the reproaching World, would embitter all my Pleasures, turn the dear purchas'd Blessing to a Curse, and make my fancied Heaven a real Hell. In this Manner would the different Agitations which tormented me, make me argue with my self. Honour, Reputation, and Gratitude were on *Worthly's* Side; but what are *these* when once oppos'd by Love! *Courtal's* bewitching Charms silenc'd, at last, all other Considerations; and *Passion* had entirely vanquish'd *Reason*, if my Doubts of his Sincerity had not interpos'd: I could not be assur'd he lov'd me, because he told me so; or if he did, how long his Passion might continue. I had heard and read too much
of

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of Men's Inconstancy, their Flatteries, their thousand Arts, to lure weak Woman to Belief and Ruin, not to tremble when I thought there was a Possibility he might not be exempted from those little Basenesses of his Sex. — These Meditations were the troublesome Companions of my Pillow; nor could my domestick Affairs, my Sister's agreeable Prattle, nor all the Amusements which the *Day* brought with it, have Power to drive them from my Thoughts: My *Body*, restless as my *Mind*, displeas'd at every Thing, uneasy every where, I wander'd up and down from Room to Room, till I heard *Worthly* was come to visit me. I was little prepar'd, and less desirous to have seen him; but in the Hurry of Temper had forgot to give Orders for my being denied: I receiv'd him in such a Manner, as let him plainly see he could not do a greater Displeasure than in staying with me. He could not forbear taking notice of the more than ordinary Coldness, and indeed Peevishness of my Behaviour; and gave me some Hints, tho' with all the Respect in the World, that a Passion so truly ardent and unblameable as his had ever been, might have expected a more favourable Return. There was too much Justice in his Complaints for me to be able to answer them, and therefore endeavour'd to quell them, by telling him, That as there was no Body, to whom I was oblig'd to be accountable for my Actions, to find fault with what I did was not the Way to engage to a Change. Madam, (said he,) I never yet have been presumptuous enough to find fault with any Thing you think fit to do; but now begin to cease the Hope of ever perswading you to any Thing in my Favour. — I well see, that in losing your Father, I lost my only Friend; — had he liv'd, your *Obedience* to him would have given me a Blessing, which I now despair of obtaining from your *Love*. He look'd full in my Face as he spoke these Words, and offer'd to take me by the Hand; which I drawing back with a Reserve, which came pretty near to Rudeness, — I find (resum'd he)

my

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my Presence is unwelcome, --- I will therefore trouble you no farther at this Time: May Heaven inspire you with more grateful Sentiments, or give me a Heart able to support your Cruelty. --- He had Power to utter no more; but turning hastily away, went out of Room in such Disorder, that it a little mov'd me. But these good-natur'd Emotions lasted not long; and what entirely chas'd 'em from my Soul, was a Letter I immediately after receiv'd from Courtal. The Words of which were these;

IF to adore without a Possibility of Hope be a Sin; it is a Sin only against our own Happiness; a Sin which all Mankind, who see you, must be guilty of, and which Heaven, who gave you such resistless Beauties, must inspire you to forgive. --- Yes, you are too Angelick to condemn us for Faults, which are not in our Power to avoid. --- 'Tis my presuming Tongue, not Heart, that has offended: I need not entreat your Pardon for loving you, but for declaring that I do so; there is, I fear, a dreadful Cause; --- I ought, indeed, to have dy'd in Silence. I know not, but your Soul, in spite of your Yesterday's Efforts to conceal it, is wholly taken up with a more deserving Object, and the Impertinence of my ill-tim'd Passion may have disturb'd those soft Ideas which mutual Tenderneſs affords. --- Tell me, divine Belinda! if I have been so criminal: Death shall be at once the Punisher of my Rashness, and Cure of my Misery; but if your Breast has any Room for Pity, O give me leave to try at least to inspire it: None ever had a Plea more just, none wou'd be more truly grateful than

Your eternally Devoted

COURTAL.

You may judge with what Transports I read this Letter, by those yourself has felt at receiving any Thing of this kind from the charming *Lyander*;
and

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and I thought I had a prodigious Command of my Temper, that I forbore giving any greater Demonstrations of my Joy, than what the following Lines contain'd :

TIS impossible either to read, or hear you without allowing you to be the most accomplish'd, most gallant, and witty of your Sex ; but whether to be able to retain those Graces, be consistent with a Love so ardent as you wou'd perswade me yours is, can only be judg'd by those vers'd in the Town-Manner of addressing. I have often heard say, by those more skill'd than myself, that the greatest Symptoms of a true Passion is to be depriv'd of Utterance, and Incoherence in Expression ; and as I have not Vanity enough to imagine there is any Thing in me capable of engaging you to the Reality, am unwilling to be made the Property of an Amusement only. However, with that Sincerity, which we in the Country prefer to all Things, I assure you that my Heart is utterly unpossess'd with any Idea of Mr. Worthly, farther than his good Qualities inspire in all who know him ; and all my softer Wishes are at Liberty to extend themselves wherever they shall find an Object deserving, by his Constancy, the Regard of

BELINDA.

I pass'd the ensuing Night in infinitely more Tranquillity than I had that before : Love banish'd all the Remains of Gratitude which had so much disturb'd me : I gave a Loose to all the Tendernefs it inspir'd ; and in return, it flatter'd my fond Wishes with a near Prospect of inexpressible Delight. To heighten my Felicity, early in the Morning the assiduous Courtal sent me a second Billet, in which I found these Lines :

WITH

WITH what Words, O most Divine Belinda!
 Shall I express the Rapture of my o'erjoy'd Heart,
 at reading your dear, obliging Letter? Even the
 Distrust you seem to have of my Sincerity, is capable
 of giving me no Pain, while you vouchsafe to assure me
 there is no greater Impediment to my Hopes! This my
 faithful Services will soon remove; but had a Person of
 more Merit taken up your Soul, I must for ever have
 despair'd! — Permit me then to begin the pleasing Task
 of proving what I am this Afternoon; and by giving
 me an early Leave to breathe out my Soul in Vows of
 everlasting Truth before you, convince me (of what is
 indeed too vast a Blessing to be easily believ'd) that
 you will not be displeas'd to find the most tender, and
 most faithful, as well as the most passionate of all
 Lovers, is

Your Adoring

COURTAL.

The seeming Sincerity of these few Lines subdued
 my easy Faith, and I resolv'd no longer to distrust
 my Happiness: Oh! he is all Angel, (cry'd I in a
 Rapture,) divinely charming in Soul as well as Body!
 I must, — I will, — believe him. And in this Hurry
 of unruly Joy, writ him an Answer in these
 Words.

TWou'd be an over-acted Modesty, and might justly
 be taken for Stupidity, to feign an Insensibility
 of your Attractions: The proudest of my Sex
 wou'd glory in the Conquest of a Heart like yours; and
 I confess, without a Blush, to find myself that happy en-
 vy'd Woman wou'd gratify an Ambition, which un-
 knowing you there cou'd not be a Ground for. The
 Favour of your Visits however, I know not, as yet, how
 to receive: Worthly, how small a Part soever he had
 in my Heart, has met with Encouragement from my
 Father, and in Obedience to his Commands, from me;
 and

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and Prudence forbids too sudden a Turn in an Affair of so much Consequence ; but, if I find you in the little Wood behind our House, about five this Evening, you shall know more of the Sentiments of

BELINDA.

You will, doubtless, wonder, that a Maid so little accusom'd to Conversation shou'd not start at the very Thought of an Affignation such as this ; but whether it were that the Inexperience of the World, and the Baseness of Mankind kept me from *imagining* the Danger, or the Violence of my Passion from *regarding* it, I must leave to the Charity of your Opinion : But, I confess, I felt not the least Regret for what I had writ, and had no Uneasiness but what sprung from my Impatience for the appointed Hour. At last it came, and while I told the Clock, my Soul exulted with a Pleasure, which till then I never knew. I believe I need not tell you I found *Courtal* in the Wood ready to receive me ; you will easily imagine, that the most trifling Inclination will, before Enjoyment, wing the Assiduity of that ungovern'd and inconstant Sex ; but I wish there were a Possibility of informing you in what Manner he accosted me, for there was something in it so much beyond Imagination, charming and engaging, that it in part wou'd justify my Behaviour toward him. --- All his Gestures were so humble and beseeching, yet withal so graceful ; --- all his Looks were accusom'd with such a piercing Softness ; --- all his Words express'd so real a Tenderness, so perfect a Sincerity, and so pure a Zeal, that even you, too sadly skill'd in the vile Arts of false deceiving Man, must have believ'd and trusted him ! I walk'd with him, heedless of the swift passing Hours, till Day was almost spent ; and it was not till the Want of Light depriv'd me of the Pleasure of gazing on him, that I consider'd how long I had been with him ; and that we were wander'd, insensibly, perhaps, to *either* of us, at least to *me* I am sure it was so.

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so, a great Distance from the House, and into the thickest and most obscure Part of the *Wood*. But it was in vain, that I reminded him how convenient it was that I shou'd return; he was too pressing, I too transported to be able to refuse him so small a Favour as my Company a few Minutes longer. Never was a Night more delectable, more aiding to a Lover's Wishes! the arching Trees form'd a Canopy over our Heads, while through the gently shaking Boughs soft Breezes play'd in lulling Murmurings, and fann'd us with delicious Gales! a thousand Nightingals sung amorous Ditties, and the billing Doves coo'd out their tender Transports!—Every Thing was soothing,—every Thing inspiring! The very Soul of Love seem'd to inform the Place, and reign throughout the Whole. A little tir'd with walking, my too-dear Companion had prevail'd on me to rest myself on a fine grassy Bank, which was at the Foot of a great Tree: He took the licens'd Freedom to place himself by me; and, methought, we sat with all the Sweets of Nature blooming round us, like the first happy Pair while bless'd with Innocence, they knew not Shame, nor Fear. But he, alas! had other Notions, and aiming only at my Ruin, believ'd he cou'd not chuse a fitter Season, and perhaps never shou'd have so favourable an Opportunity as this: He now began to mingle Kisses and Embraces with his Vows: My Hands were the first Victims of his fiery Pressures; then my Lips, my Neck, my Breast; and perceiving that, quite lost in Extasy, I but faintly resisted what he did, far greater Boldnesses ensued!—My Soul dissolv'd! its Faculties o'erpower'd!—and Reason, Pride, and Shame, and Fear, and every Foe to soft Desire, charm'd to Forgetfulness! my trembling Limbs refus'd to oppose the lovely Tyrant's Will! and, if my faltering Tongue entreated him to desist, or my weak Hands attempted to repulse the encroaching Liberty of his, it serv'd but, as he said, the more to inflame his Wishes, and raise his Passion to a higher Pitch of Fury! Oh! I

had

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had been inevitably lost, had not Heaven sent me a Deliverance, even in the Moment I was about to be made the most wretched of its Creatures. *Worthly*, born for my Preservation! *Worthly*, doom'd to do me all manner of good Offices, though to my own Destruction! had been to enquire for me; and not finding me at home, happen'd to come into the *Wood*, not mistrusting I was there, but to indulge that Melancholy my late Carriage had inspir'd. Chance had led him to that Part where we were, and hearing my Voice, he kept himself conceal'd, and was Witness to all the latter Part of our Conversation: He heard enough, Heaven knows, to make him scorn and hate me; yet, generous to the last, when I was on the very Brink of Ruin, he rush'd forth and sav'd me. Rise, Villain, (said he,) and prepare for a different Encounter: -- You shall not live to wrong another in the Manner you have done me; nor shall that Woman, ungrateful as she is, fall a Sacrifice to your base Desires. The Surprise that *Courtal* was in at these Words, and the Knowledge who it was that spoke them, did not hinder him from putting himself in a Posture to receive him: He had his Sword out almost as soon as the other. But what was my Confusion, -- my Distraction, to find myself thus expos'd! and to the Man from whom of all the World I most desir'd my Weakness shou'd be conceal'd! I had certainly run between their Swords, and receiv'd those Wounds each design'd for the other, but Shame and Horror struck me motionless; and without the Power even of endeavouring to prevent it, must have been Witness to some fatal Consequence of which myself was the Cause, if my Sister, being told by some Body that saw me, where I was, and wondering at my Stay, had not at that Instant come with some of the Servants in search of me. The enrag'd Rivals, on the first Appearance of the Lights she brought with her, sheath'd their Swords; but she saw enough in all our Faces to inform her, that something extraordinary had happen'd: But it was in vain for

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for her to enquire, we all were speechless with our several Agitations; till *Worthly*, turning to *Courtal*, We are prevented now, (said he,) but I shall take a Time more proper to reward your Villany; and giving him a furious Look, flung hastily away, without staying for his Answer. *Courtal* was either less disturb'd, or had infinitely more Command of his Temper than any of us on this Occasion; and seeming to take no Notice of his Rival's Words, gave me his Hand, in order to conduct me home: But I cou'd not now endure he shou'd look on me, or touch me; and leaning on my Sister with one Hand, and with the other holding a Handkerchief before my Face, to hide as much as possible my Disorders, made what Haste I cou'd from that unlucky Place. He did not leave us, however, till we got quite to our Door; and as we went, made use of all his Rhetorick to perswade me to think no otherwise of what had happen'd, than as a Matter of no Consequence. It was wholly improper I shou'd answer him as I *wou'd*, therefore forbore answering at all: Nor was it to any Purpose, that my Sister begg'd me to make her a Relation of this Adventure, after we came home; and only telling her, that I was not in a talking Humour, and bidding her trouble me no farther, I shut myself into my Chamber, and there gave a Loose to all the distracted Emotions of my Soul. -- Oh! what did I not endure this cruel Night? and what, indeed, must I for ever endure, in the Reflection on the dreadful Consequence? *Belinda* could not come to this Part of her Story without falling into Agonies, much like those which had so often interrupted the RECLUSE in the Course of her's; and it was now that Lady's Turn to comfort; which she did with such Success, that the other was soon able to resume her Discourse in this Manner:

The Shame and Confusion that I was in (said she) at what happen'd, was not all that tormented me; I had *Fears*, which were, if possible, more alarming even than my *Remorse*: I knew very well the Violence

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Violence of *Worthly's* Passion for me: — I saw the just Rage my Behaviour had put him in, and remember'd what he said to *Courtal* at parting, and cou'd not hope this Adventure wou'd end without Blood. After a thousand Inventions how to prevent the Mischief I with so much Reason dreaded, I resolv'd, at last, to try my Power once more with *Worthly*, and compos'd my Thoughts as well as I could to form a Letter to him, in which I confess'd that I had been ungrateful to his Affection, and by my Folly and ill Conduct had now render'd myself utterly unworthy the Continuance of it; but conjur'd him by the Memory of that Tenderness he once had for me, not to publish my Weakness to the World, by making any Noise of this Affair. I writ also to *Courtal*, and entreated him, by all the Passion he profess'd for me, and by those Assurances my late Condescension had given him of mine, to avoid all Occasions of meeting *Worthly*; and if he should receive any Letter or Message like what his last Words imported, to lay aside his *Honour* in favour of his *Love*, and the Consideration how much my Reputation must suffer in a Quarrel of that Nature. I express'd these Requests to both of them in the most moving Terms I was capable of, and what Effect I might have wrought I know not; for though I went not to Bed all Night, it was so late the next Day before I had finish'd, that just as I was sealing up the last, I was interrupted by my Sister's knocking violently at my Chamber Door, and calling to me to open it, in a Tone, and with a Disorder, which told something more than ordinary was the Cause, before I gave her Entrance: But when I had, --- O Sister! (said she) *Worthly* is kill'd, — murdered by Sir *Thomas Courtal*, and his Servants say it was on your Account they fought. — O God! what chilling Horrors seiz'd my whole Frame when she pronounc'd these Words? If she spoke any Thing more, I was incapable of hearing it, for I fell immediately into a Swoon, in which I lay so long, that, as they since told me, neither she
nor

nor the Maids that she call'd to my Assistance, believed I should ever recover. But my Miseries were not to have so short a Date, and I again return'd to Sense, --- to all the Racks of Thought and curs'd Remembrance. As soon as my Agonies would give me leave to speak, and to enquire, I received the Confirmation of the dismal Story. They told me that the Body of *Worthly*, cover'd with Wounds, and all besmear'd with Blood, was just brought by our House, in order to be carried home, his Seat not being above a Bow-Shot distant from ours; and, that a Servant, who was witness to his dying Words, and seem'd acquainted with the whole Affair, waited to speak with me. As much as I dreaded to hear what the Fellow had to say to me, yet I order'd he should come up; and when he did, desir'd him to give me an Account of all he knew concerning this unhappy Accident, which he presently did in these Words: Early this Morning (said he) my Master call'd me up, and giving me a Letter, commanded me to carry it to the Inn where Sir *Thomas Courtal* lay. I found him in Bed; but he immediately rose, and gave me an Answer in Writing. At my Return my Master was dress'd; and as soon as he had read what I brought, prepar'd himself to go out, and seeing me about to follow him, as was my Duty, he forbid me with a Peevishness which he was not us'd to express himself with. This Charge and the Agitations I had observ'd both in his Countenance, and that of Sir *Thomas's*, while he was reading the Letter, gave me some Suspicion of the Truth. I acquainted one of my Fellows with my Conjecture, and we both thought it our Duty to seek him; but in resolving what to do we had wasted so much Time, that at our Entrance into a Field, (not far from hence, and, which we thought, if any Thing of what we imagin'd were true, would be as likely a Place as any for the Scene of Action,) we met Sir *Thomas* who seem'd to be in a prodigious Hurry. I ask'd if he seen my Master; and he answered that he had

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not. But we did not put so much Confidence in what he said, but that we went on in the Way we perceiv'd he came from, and soon found my poor Master breathing out his last. When we came near him, *Harry*, (said he to me, with a Voice scarce intelligible,) I am kill'd: --- Tell *Belinda* that I die for her, ---and warn her to take care of --- He was able to bring forth no more; for at that Instant Death clos'd his Lips for ever. Here the poor Fellow ended his sad Account, and was just going out of the Room half-blinded with his Tears, when I call'd him back, to ask what was become of *Courtal*. You may be sure, Madam, (answered he,) that I would leave nothing undone for the Revenge of my dear Master's Blood; and as soon as the Body was carried home, took Persons with me to search for him at the Inn: But he was too speedy for my Diligence, and, with both his Servants, had taken Horse, and, I fear, is gone beyond the Reach of those sent in Pursuit of him; for we cou'd get no Intelligence which Road he took. Though I had all the real Concern imaginable, and Grief for *Worthly's* Death, and the Cause of it, yet, I confess, I could not hear that *Courtal* was out of Danger without a secret Joy, which was but too guilty. I dissembled it, however, and dismiss'd the Fellow with a Belief that all the Sorrow I had been in, sprung only from the Loss of his Master. All our Family were of that Opinion; and I had the Opportunity of vailing my other Troubles under that Covert, which was both just and laudable. I had, indeed, so much Anxiety of Mind, with every Thing together, that I was not able to stay in a Place, where all I saw or heard would but put me more in Remembrance of my Misfortunes; and I will not tell you, but the Impossibility of ever seeing *Courtal* there again, was the chief Reason of making it odious to me. I therefore order'd the Coach to be got ready, and the same Day went to a Relation's House, about eight Miles farther in the Country, desiring my Sister,

if

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if any Letter should come, to send it to me there; for I imagin'd *Courtal* would write to me as soon as he thought himself out of Danger. I gave her so strict a Charge to take care of it, that, join'd to some other little Remarks she had made on my late Carriage, made her not far from guessing the Truth of my Sentiments; and she took the Liberty of reproaching me with Ingratitude and Inconstancy. I gave myself but little Concern to perswade her that I did not deserve to be tax'd with those Vices; but redoubling my Desires that she would send any Letter that should be directed to me, took my Leave. What I did soon after, will convince you that nothing, indeed, was able to abate that wild Passion that *Courtal* had inspir'd me with; for having waited at my Cousin's House about nine or ten Days, and hearing nothing from home, I grew so uneasy, that I resolv'd to be gone from thence. I remember'd to have heard *Courtal* say he had Business in *London*, which would oblige him to defer the Progress he intended to make through the Counties till next Year, and fancied he might be gone directly thither. I did not doubt but if he were, I should be able to find him out; and when once this Belief had settled itself in me, I delay'd not a Moment, but borrowing Horses and a Servant of my Cousin, went straight to *Warwick*, and from thence took the Stage for *London*. It was that Kinswoman who directed me to this House, having formerly been a Boarder here herself; and assuring me that if any Packet came from our House, she should send it immediately after me, made me pretty well satisfied in my Mind, that no Mistake would prevent the Blessing of hearing from him, and knowing where to find him, in case I should miss of him in *London*.

The Fatigue of my Journey did not hinder me from sending, as soon as I came here, to all publick Places to enquire for him; but no such Person was to be found: And what amaz'd me most, was, that a Man of that Fashion, and so noted as I imagin'd him

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to be, should be utterly unknown to every Body. I did not in the least doubt, but that if I had not the good Fortune of meeting with him here, I should be able to get a perfect Account of his Character and Circumstances; but, alas! the Name of *Courtal* was as little known as the *Arabian* Dialect; and I might have spent my whole Life in a fruitless Inquisition, had I not believ'd my Want of Intelligence was in great Measure owing to the Carelessness of those I employ'd, and resolv'd to be my own Spy in an Affair of so much Consequence to my Peace. I had no sooner determin'd on this, than an Opportunity offer'd as lucky as I could have wish'd: One of the Boarders here happened to have a young Lady, a Relation of her's, come to visit her: There being a very good Tragedy acted that Night, they agreed to go to see it; and having talk'd of it before me, ask'd if I would accompany them thither: Though I had very little Relish for that, or any other Diversion, as my Affairs were, yet I was extremely pleas'd with the Proposal, believing no Place more probable to give me a Sight of him, whose Presence was all my Wishes aim'd at. Neither of them were dress'd for the Boxes; and I had an inexpressible Satisfaction in my Mind, to think, that if I should be so fortunate to meet *Courtal* there, I should have the Opportunity to observe his Manner of Behaviour, unseen by him. In short, we all went in a *Dishabillee* to the Gallery, and chose to sit in the very Corner of it, where, without being taken Notice of ourselves, we might see with Ease all the Persons that came into the House. The Ladies that came with me, knowing me to be a Stranger, were so complaisant as to give me an Account what and who most of the Company of any Note were, as they came into their Places; but I had little Ears for their Discourse, my Soul was all collected in my Eyes, and busily employ'd in search of him, whom the Hope of seeing only had engaged my being there. Long I had look'd in vain, till the House being pretty full,

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full, and I beginning to despair of being so happy, at last I saw him enter. His Charms were too peculiar, and my Thoughts too full of them, not to make me know him the Moment he set his Foot into the Box. — Good God! how lovely did he appear that Night! how graceful! Those Perfections which in the Country, where a *Bon Mien* is a Prodigy, one might think shewn to Advantage, were no less distinguishable among a Crowd of *Beaux*! Surrounded by those, who by their very *Air* one might perceive made it their Study to attract, he shone with a superior Brightness, and with an unaffected manly Majesty asserted the Dignity of his Charms, and seemed to scorn each trifling Emulator. As I was contemplating on his unmatched Beauties, I heard one of my Companions say to the other, Cousin, do you see who is yonder? Yes, (reply'd she that was spoke to,) I find that Villain, to his other Vices, has that of being ashamed of nothing. How unconcern'd he looks, (resum'd the former;) and yet, I believe, this is the first Time of his appearing since his late base Action. They had a good deal more of this kind of Discourse between themselves, which I but little regarded, not knowing of whom they were talking, nor the least imagining that any Thing of what they said was any Concern of mine; till some Ladies coming into the Box over-against us, I saw *Courtal* quit his own, and stepping hastily into that in which they were, seemed to entertain them with a World of Gaiety, and with a Familiarity which gave me a Taste of what (by the little I felt) I believe to be the most dreadful of all Passions, *Jealousy*! One of them, though I hated her for the Freedom I saw she us'd him with, I could not forbear thinking perfectly agreeable; but she that sat by her, tho' not the thousandth Part so engaging, appeared to have the greatest Share of *Courtal's* Admiration. I perceived he look'd on her with a beseeching Air, and a Tenderness in his Deportment, which made me almost mad, while the other often pull'd

him by the Sleeve, patted his Hand, whisper'd to him, and seem'd, by a World of little Fondnesses, to endeavour to oblige him to a more peculiar Regard. Judge what my Condition was at a Sight so unexpected, so fatal to my Hopes! I felt in one Moment all that Despair, and Rage, and Jealousy, could inflict; and 'twas as much as I could do to restrain myself from giving some Proof of it, which would have made me ridiculous to the whole Assembly. Not being able to observe their Motions any longer with Patience, I turn'd to her that sat next me, and ask'd if she knew who those Ladies were. One of them (answered she) is the *Wife*, the other the *Mistress* of that Gentleman that just now plac'd himself behind them. --- The *Wife*! (interrupted I, in a much greater Surprise than can be easily comprehended:) The *Wife* did you say, Madam? Yes, (resum'd she,) that Lady in the Green and Silver Brocade is his *Wife*; but tho' she is accounted one of the most celebrated Beauties in Town, and is certainly a Woman of a very excellent Temper, had a vast Fortune, and has not been married much above a Year, yet she possesses but a small Share in her unworthy Husband's Affection: I dare swear she has this Moment a Weight of Discontent upon her Heart, though her Prudence enables her to conceal any Marks of it in her Countenance and Behaviour: That Creature by her, in the flower'd Damask, who has neither Beauty, good Shape, or any Thing to recommend her but a little flashy Wit, and a vast deal of Assurance, she is oblig'd, for her domestick Peace, to be civil to, though every Body knows her to be the most cruel Enemy she has, and that her Husband passes most of his Hours, and great Part of his Substance, with her. All the Time she was speaking, though I listen'd attentively to what she utter'd, I had my Eyes fix'd on *Courtal*: I lov'd with too much Passion, not to be assur'd it was he I saw before me; --- I knew I could not be mistaken, but I imagin'd *her* to be infinitely so: What she told me

was

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was so inconsistent with the Idea I had form'd of his Humour, or the Character I had heard of his Circumstances, that I cou'd not believe one Tittle of what she said. Madam, you are prodigiously deceiv'd (cry'd I, in a kind of Disdain) in the Persons you are talking of: That Gentleman was my particular Acquaintance in the Country, and I am confident has no Wife, or, if he had, is not of a Principle so vile to use her in the Manner you describe. I know not (said the other Lady) what he may have done to entitle him to your good Opinion, but am very certain, there are too many here who know him to be a far worse Monster than my Cousin has represented him. I shou'd be very much asham'd (rejoin'd I, more warmly than before) to take the Part of a Man, who really cou'd deserve those Severities some Reports may have exacted from you, but must ask your Pardon, if I tell you, that I cannot recede from what I have said, because I am confident, if Sir *Thomas Courtal* were sensible of the Accusations he lies under, he wou'd find it no difficult Matter to clear himself. — Sir *Thomas Courtal*! (cry'd they both out;) for Heaven's sake, who are you talking of? The Man (answer'd I, more amaz'd at that Question than at what they had told me of him) whose Character you have been so free with. — Bless me! (said one of them,) I know him not: Nor I, (cry'd the other:) I thought we had all this while been speaking of my Lord —

Here *Belinda* made a full Stop, as considering whether she shou'd name him; and after about a Moment's Reflection, — You will pardon me, (said she to the RECLUSE,) if I conceal the real Name of this ungrateful Man; for, I confess, in spite of the Deceit he has us'd me with, and the Crimes he has been guilty of, I have still a Tenderness for him which makes me unwilling to expose him. And the RECLUSE, assuring her she wou'd be far from desiring to know any more than she shou'd think fit to reveal, gave her leave to proceed in her Discourse in this Manner;

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If before (continu'd she) I thought these Ladies were mistaken; I was now confirm'd they were so, when they nam'd a Person altogether a Stranger to me. I knew (said I) you must at last acknowledge your Error; that Gentleman to whom you give the Title of *Lord* is no more than a *Baronet*, his Name is Sir *Thomas Courtal*; and, I am sure, if he were sensible of it, wou'd be very sorry to have any Resemblance of a Man so base. Good God! (said one of them,) you will not go about to perswade us, that he, in the White trimm'd with Gold, is any other than the Person we have nam'd. I am very certain it is not, (answer'd I.) As we were in this Dispute, a Woman came to us to know if we wanted any Fruit: Since (said the Lady) we are not able to convince you, let this Woman be the Judge: These sort of People are acquainted with every Body, and she can have no Interest in disguising the Truth. When she had spoke these Words, she beckon'd the Woman, and making a Pretence of buying some Fruit, desir'd her to tell us who that Gentleman was; she immediately confirm'd what my Companions had said, and run on in a good deal of impertinent Chat about him. You see (resum'd the Lady that boards here) how much your Eyes, or the great Likeness there may be between two Persons, has deceiv'd you; but we have sufficient Reasons to know what he is, which when we come home I will acquaint you with. At that Instant the Curtain drew up, and the Attention I found they were willing to give to the Play, prevented any farther Discourse: But how I pass'd the Time of the Performance cannot be conceiv'd, without being possess'd with Agitations such as mine: I had no room to hope there was a Probability of so many Persons being mistaken, and his Behaviour to the Ladies that sat in the Box with him, confirm'd the Character I heard of him to be too true. But presently after I receiv'd a Demonstration which took from me all Possibility of doubting the Reality of my Misfortunes: When the Play was done, having
no

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no Servant there to provide us a Coach, we were oblig'd to wait at the Door for one to come to us, which it could not do immediately, being hindred by a Chariot which stood ready for its Owner's Approach. I observ'd there were two or three Footmen belonging to it; and one of them, tho' now in a different and much richer Dress, I perfectly remember'd to be the Man that officiated in the Place of poor *Worthly's* Coachman, that fatal Day in which I first beheld the perjur'd *Courtal*, and since had been the Bearer of those *Billets* I receiv'd from him. I pull'd my Hood as forward as I could to prevent his seeing my Face, and changing my Voice, ask'd him to whom that Chariot belong'd; and he had no sooner told me (as I fear'd he would) the Name which had given me such Confusion, than I perceiv'd him coming, the Lord, or *Courtal*, or both, for both indeed were one. He conducted the Ladies he had been with into the Chariot; and stepping hastily into a Chair which stood there, depriv'd me of the Opportunity of speaking and upbraiding him, as else I should have done in the distracted Condition I then was, without any Regard how improper it was I should do so in such a Place, and before the Company I had with me. After this we got into a Coach; and the Lady who came to visit her that lives here, sat us down, it being in her way home. One would imagine, that to find my self thus cruelly deceiv'd, had been sufficient to have made me forego all the Tenderness which had led me into such Misfortunes; and if I could not think of him with Hatred, to endeavour not to think of him at all: But in spite of the just Rage I was in, the Impatience, the jealous Curiosity of a Lover still remain'd: I remember'd that one of the Ladies told me, they had particular Reasons to know who the Person was whom I affirm'd to be Sir *Thomas Courtal*, and had hardly Patience to stay till Supper was over for the Performance of the Promise she made me to acquaint me with them. I was beginning to stretch my In-

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vention

vention to form a Story to make her believe, that it was wholly on the Account of a Friend, and not of any farther Consequence to me, which had made me so inquisitive, lest by giving her Occasion to suspect the Truth, I should expose my self to the Ridicule of the whole Family. But I might have spar'd my self that Trouble: The Aversion she had to him kept her from regarding any Thing but the Pleasure it gave her to have an Opportunity of telling a Story so much to his Disadvantage; and I had little Occasion for Entreaty to engage her to satisfy my Curiosity, and make me sensible, that the Man I had consider'd as so worthy Adoration, that all I could do for him was rather a Merit than a Fault, was indeed the most vile, and most perfidious of his Sex.

She illustrated the History she gave me with many Circumstances, which aggravated the Foulness of the Fact: But so much Time has been taken up in the recounting of my own Affairs, that I will not detain your Attention in relating the Particulars of this, and shall only, by giving you the Heads of what she told me, let you see that I am not the only Woman whom his Artifices have render'd miserable. The Sister of that Lady who came to visit her that lodges here, tho' for a very different Reason, is as unhappy as my self, and suffers as much in the not loving him, as I do for loving him too well. She is, it seems, one of the most agreeable Women in Town: Her Accomplishments are such as cannot fail of attracting a great Number of Admirers; but among the rest, there was a young Man of Quality, who profess'd the highest Esteem for her, and she thought her self no less happy in his Addresses, than he did in her Acceptance of them. They long had lov'd each other with a most violent, tho' pure Affection; but either through Disparity of Birth, or some other Reason, both thought convenient to keep their Amour a Secret. That Villain (for I shall henceforth call him by no other Name) being an intimate Friend
of

The BRITISH RECLUSE. 107

of the Lovers, was the only trusted Person: He convey'd Letters between them, and through his means they had frequent Opportunities of meeting. He continu'd faithful for some Time; but *Miranda* was, it seems, too *charming*, not to be capable of making an Impression on any Heart, much more on one so amorous as his; and he is too *base* not to make use of any Means, which might give him the Gratification of his Wishes, and too *artful* to be at a Loss to find them. As by his Contrivance they had often *met*, so by his Contrivance they were at last entirely *parted*; both having a Confidence in his Sincerity, yielded an implicate Faith to what he said: And he soon form'd a Stratagem to make each appear to the other more worthy of *Hate* than *Love*, till, if they could not entertain a *real* Aversion, they feign'd at least so to do; and keeping their Resentments still warm, by new Inventions, prevented either from endeavouring an *Eclaircissement*. The *Lover*, tho' he imagin'd he had bestow'd his Heart on a Person altogether unworthy of the Present, was too truly touch'd with the Passion he had profess'd, to be able to withdraw it; and finding it impossible to continue in the same Climate with her, without continuing to adore her; and having too great a Spirit to avow it, after what he suppos'd he knew of her Ingratitude, resolv'd to put it out of his Power to do any thing below the Dignity of that Reason, which all People ought to make use of in an Affair of that Kind, when they find themselves ill-treated, without a justifiable Cause, by the Person who once has flatter'd them with a Shew of Tenderness. In short, to the Amazement of the whole Town, and the great Grief of all his Friends and Acquaintance, (but he whose Arts had occasion'd him to do it,) he went to travel; and the Lady, tho' her very Soul went with him, believing herself injur'd by his Ingratitude, and the Insinuations of his faithless Friend, scorn'd to make any Trial of her Power to prevent him.

The

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The belov'd Rival once remov'd, this common Deceiver of them both,--- nay, of the whole World, thought there was no Obstacle remaining to his Wishes, and doubted not the Influence of his too-often successful Charms. In a very few Days he declar'd himself her Lover; and made no Scruple to let her know, he hop'd she would reward his Passion. But, *this once*, he found his Designs frustrated: However she had disguis'd it, she still retain'd too great a Tenderness for her absent Lover, to entertain the least Thought of putting any other in his Place; and besides, was a Woman of too much Honour and Discretion, not to look on all Attempts made upon her Virtue with the utmost Contempt; and that this was so, there was no room to doubt, since she knew him to be married. The Lady, who gave me this Account, told me, that nothing could be more enrag'd than she was at the Declaration he made her; that she rejected all his Offers, and forbid him ever to visit her any more: But, as it is the Nature of that ingrateful Sex still to pursue what flies them, he redoubled his Efforts. Deny'd the Liberty of speaking, he writ to her in the most moving and *seeming* sincere Strain that ever Heart dictated; but after the Receipt of the first Letter, the known Character on the Superscription prevented her from reading what the next contain'd, and she immediately sent it back unopen'd. Yet still undaunted he went on; and to make her sensible how capable he was to make even Contradictions join, and, by the Effects of his too powerful Wit, dress the foulest Vice in the Beauties of the fairest Virtue, he sent long Epistles to argue down her Honour, and to persuade her, that to a Passion so sublime as his, to be cruel only was a Crime. But whether it was owing to her good Sense, or the Prepossession of *another* Idea, which made her insensible of *his* (I must say) unmatch'd Perfections, I know not; but as excellent a Logician as he is, all his Sophistry here prov'd vain. And tho' she could not avoid receiving some of his Letters,

ters, because he either disguis'd his Hand, or got some other Person to direct them, yet they had no other Effect on her, than what was very different from his Expectations: She hated him still more; shun'd him as a Monster; and if, by chance, she saw him at any publick Place, (as he took all Opportunities of being where she was,) her very Countenance discover'd the secret Disdainings of her Soul; and tho' where'er she turn'd he follow'd her with Eyes trembling with Tenderness, and all the Languishments of despairing Love, (Looks, Heaven knows, he is too well us'd to wear,) a stern Severity only shone in hers; and if, to avoid being taken Notice of, she was oblig'd to answer the Civilities he paid her, Scorn lighten'd in her Glances; when'er she spoke, proud Indignation triumph'd in her Accents, and haughty Detestation sparkled in her Air. Such a Deportment, had his Passion been of that Kind which is worthy of the Name of *Love*, must have reduc'd him to a Condition justly meriting Compassion; but Love is a Flame too bright, too pure, to blaze in a Heart so full of Fraud and vile Hypocrisy. As Affairs were in this Posture between them, there came an Account that the Ship in which the poor, unfortunate, deluded Lover embark'd was cast away, and all on Board it lost; and at the very same Time, his equally-deceiv'd Mistress receiv'd a Letter, which he had writ to her from a Sea-port Town, where they happen'd to put in. That unhappy Gentleman, tho' he had been made to believe her infinitely undeserving of it, still retain'd the same Tenderness he had ever profess'd, and had not the Power to forbear letting her know it, tho' he had the Power to leave her. In this Testimony of his continu'd Faith, there was some little Mixture of Upbraidings, which made her no Stranger to the Cause of his Departure; and that it was not *his* Want of Love and Truth, but the seeming Reasons he had to doubt of *hers*, which had depriv'd her of her Lover. Had it been possible to have recall'd him, with what a

Transport

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Transport must she have welcom'd an Eclaircissement; but, alas! he was now irrecoverably lost. She found his Faith, his Constancy, his Tenderness, but found at the same Time she was past the Possibility of receiving any Benefit of his Virtues; and, if one rightly considers her Condition, I know not if it were not less Misery to have believed him *false*, than know him *true*, and know him lost for ever. I will not go about to make any Repetition of what I was told concerning the Surprise, Despair, and Rage, which seiz'd the Heart of this unfortunate Lady at so unexpected a Catastrophe; 'tis easy for you to imagine she must be transported with an uncommon Fury: But while she was venting the Anguish of her Soul in Curses on the hated Author of her Miseries, he was contriving Means to gratify his Desires on her; and finding in vain to prosecute his lawless Suit by those Ways he had began it in, he had the unbounded Impudence to resolve on others, yet more impious, and seek by *Force* to obtain what he was now convinc'd Entreaties would for ever fail to give him. Opportunity was all he wanted to perpetrate his Design; and none for a long Time offering, he grew desperate enough to despise all Considerations; and knowing she very often went to Evening-Prayers, he waited at the Church-Door with a Hackney-Coach, and was about to seize and drag her violently into it. The Action was so sudden, that tho' there were many People coming out at the same Time, the Surprise it gave 'em would have prevented her receiving any Assistance, if two Gentlemen, that were passing by, had not had Presence enough of Mind to draw their Swords in her Defence; just as he had so far compass'd his Intent, as to be getting into the Coach himself, after having thrust her into it. He wanted not Courage to engage with them both; but a Crowd of People immediately coming about them, put a Stop to any Mischief either to him or them. Had such a Piece of Villany been attempted by a meaner Man,

The BRITISH RECLUSE. III

Man, he certainly had been secur'd; but his Quality made every Body unwilling to create to themselves so powerful an Enemy; and he had the Liberty of retreating, venting ten thousand Curses on his ill Fortune and the Gentlemen who had frustrated his Design; while *Miranda*, tho' half dead with the Fright, was safely conducted home by her Deliverers. Such an Attempt on a Lady so much distinguish'd as *Miranda*, and made by such a Person, must certainly occasion a great deal of Discourse in the World; and her Brother, who is a Colonel, would have been suspected to have but little Regard to the Honour of his Family, if he had not resent'd it in the Manner he did. The next Day he sent a Challenge to the intended Ravisher; which being answered, as he expected it would, they met in that Field behind *Mountague-House*, so famous for Duels: But, in spite of the Justness of his Cause, the Brother had the worst of it; and the other leaving him wounded, and, as he thought, dead, made his Escape; nor durst appear in Town, till he heard, contrary to every Body's Expectation, that his Antagonist was out of Danger; and that Night which shew'd him to me at the *Play-House*, was the first of his being seen since the Time he fought.

Belinda had no sooner finish'd this little History, than she observ'd an excessive Paleness in the Face of the RECLUSE; and before she could have Time to ask if she were ill, saw her fall fainting on the Couch: But there no Occasion to call in any Body to her Assistance, her Spirits were not above a Moment absent; and, at their Return, O Madam! said she, (looking on *Belinda* with Eyes streaming with Tears,) how strangely has Fortune brought together two Wretches, fit only for the Society of each other? We are, indeed, too nearly ally'd in our Misfortunes, and to one fatal Source owe both our Woes! I might from the very Beginning of your Story have imagin'd it, — might have known that such prodigious *Charms*, and such prodigious *Villany*, were no where blended
but

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but in my perfidious, but still dear *Lysander*! --- Your *Courtal*, --- my *Lysander* are the same; and both are found only in the Person of the too-lovely faithless *Bellamy*. The Surprise that *Belinda* was in at these Words, took from her for some Time the Power of answering; nor could she for a long while bring out any more than --- Good God! is it possible? --- Tho' lost to all the World, resum'd the RECLUSE, and wholly regardless of every Thing that pass'd, this last Action of the inconstant *Bellamy*, in spite of me, reach'd my Ear: And I suppose it was in the Time of his absconding that he went to *Warwick*, and took on him that borrow'd Name of *Courtal*, to prevent his being apprehended, if any Account of what he had done should be brought down. Yes, said *Belinda*, (now a little recover'd from her Amazement,) that was certainly the Motive which induc'd him both to take that Journey, and to disguise his true Quality; for, by the Account which the Lady gave me, I found it was not many Days after the Accident, that we had the ill Fortune to be overtaken by him on the Road.

These fair Companions in Affliction pass'd some Time in bewailing their several Misfortunes, sometimes exclaiming against the *Vices*, sometimes praising the *Beauties* of their common Betrayer, till the RECLUSE, being desirous to know if there was any Thing more to be heard of her *Lysander*, entreated *Belinda* to finish the remaining Part of her Story. Alas, Madam, reply'd that dejected Lady, I have nothing farther to relate, unless I confess I am weak enough to retain still in my Soul a secret Tenderness for this unworthy Man; and that not the Knowledge of his unexampled Perfidy and Inhumanity to you, his base Design on *Miranda*, nor the Miseries he has brought on myself, can bring me to consider him as I ought. Tho' I resolve never to see him more, I neither can forget nor remember him as a Woman govern'd by Reason would do. Has he then not seen you since you came to Town? (interrupted the

RECLUSE

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RECLUSE somewhat hastily.) No, on my Honour, he (answered the other,) he knows not of my being here, nor, I dare swear, thinks my Presence worth a Wish; but was I sure he did, nay, was I convinc'd that, tho' false to my Sex beside, to me he would be true, nay, did his Life depend on my granting him one Interview, I protest, by all that I adore, I never would consent, No, Madam, (contin'd she, with the most resolute Air,) I owe much more than such a Self-denial to the Memory of poor *Worthly*,--- to the Friendship I have already conceiv'd for you,--- and to the Justice of revenging, as far as in my Power, the little Regard he has hitherto paid our Sex. The RECLUSE seem'd perfectly pleas'd with this Assurance, and omitted nothing to strengthen her in this Resolution.

There grew so entire a Friendship between these Ladies, that they were scarce a Moment asunder: *Belinda* quitted her Chamber, being desir'd by the RECLUSE to take Part of her Bed. Their common Misfortunes were a Theme not to be exhausted, and they still found something for which to condole each other. In this melancholy Entertainment did they pass some Days, till *Belinda* receiv'd Letters from the Country, which brought an Account that *Worthly's* Wounds, having been search'd by an able Surgeon, were found not mortal; that his greatest Danger had been Loss of Blood; that he was now perfectly recover'd, and with new Life had entertain'd new Wishes: *Belinda's* Sister had express'd so tender a Concern for his Misfortunes, and so high an Esteem for his Virtues, that he found it no Difficulty to transmit to her all the Affection he had bore her Sister. The Wedding-Day was appointed; and soon after *Belinda* receiv'd an Account that it was solemnized, to the general Satisfaction of all Friends on both Sides, and the lasting Happiness of the married Pair. Tho' *Belinda* was far from envying her Sister that good Fortune, which she was incapable of possessing herself, yet the Cause which render'd her
so,

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so, made her unwilling to behold it; and, in a short Time, both their Resolutions of abandoning the World continuing, the RECLUSE and she took a House about seventy Miles distant from London, where they still live in a perfect Tranquility, happy in the real Friendship of each other, despising the uncertain *Pleasures*, and free from all the *Hurries* and *Disquiets* which attend the Gaieties of the Town: And where a solitary Life is the Effect of *Choice*, it certainly yields more solid Comfort than all the publick Diversions which those who are the greatest Pursuers of them can find.



THE



THE
INJUR'D HUSBAND:
OR, THE
Mistaken Resentment.

A
NOVEL.



THE
HISTORICAL
AND
LITERARY

RECORDS
OF THE
HISTORICAL
AND
LITERARY

INJURY
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To the Right Honourable the

Lady *HOW*.

MADAM,



Edications are become so scandalous of late, that, if Modesty were not a Virtue too little fashionable, both the PATRON and WRITER wou'd be out of Countenance. The

Reason of this is evident: The Press is set to work only to gratify a mercenary End; and He or She, who is look'd on as a Person most likely to serve that Purpose, is address'd; and fulsome Praises, and undeserv'd Encomiums, generally answer the Design they are given for.

But I, *MADAM*, propose to myself a nobler Advantage, by entreating the Protection of a Lady qualified like You. The Subject of the Trifle I presume to offer, is, *The Worst*
of

DEDICATION.

of *Women*; and while I treat of the Inadvertencies, and indeed Vices, which there is a Possibility that *our* Sex may be guilty of, I wou'd put those of the *other* in Mind, that there is *One* among us, whose *Virtues* may atone for the *Mismanagement* of the Rest:

To particularize what they are, or enter into a Detail of those Perfections, which, while they attract the Admiration of *all*, are to be describ'd by *none*, wou'd only prove me guilty of a Self-sufficiency of Thought, and justly render me unworthy of Your Favour: Of two Evils, therefore, I will chuse the least, and rather confess my Inability to speak of You, as You deserve, than by enervate Praises *lessen* the Worth I wou'd *proclaim*. The Sun by his own Rays can only be describ'd; and while the most *Abject* of created Beings receive the Benefit of his Influence, the *Noblest* are at a Loss for Means to represent him: The same Misfortune is the Fate of all who contemplate the Character of Your Ladyship. Then why shou'd I lament the Want of that which the most eminently distinguish'd Genius's wou'd find themselves deficient in, though not in so far distant a Degree as,

MADAM,

Your Ladyship's

Most Devoted,

Most Faithful, and

Obedient Servant,

ELIZA HAYWOOD.



P R E F A C E.



Roubling the Reader with any Thing of this Kind, is generally so little to the Purpose, that I have often thought the Authors made use of such Introductions more to swell the Bulk of their Book, than any other Reason: And how sensible soever I am of the many Faults the following Sheets are full of, I shou'd rather commit myself and them to the Good Nature of the World, than add to them by an impertinent Apology.

It is not, therefore; to excuse my Want of Judgment in the Conduct, or my Deficiency of Expressing the Passions I have endeavour'd to represent, but to clear myself of an Accusation which, I am inform'd, is already contrived and prepared to thunder out against me, as soon as this is publish'd, that I take this Pains.

A Gentleman, who applies the little Ingenuity he is Master of to no other Study than that of sowing Dissention among those who are so unhappy, and indeed unwise, as to entertain him, either imagines, or pretends to do so, that tho' I have laid the Scene in Paris, I mean that the Adventure shou'd be thought to have happen'd in London; and that in the Character of a
French

P R E F A C E.

French Baroneſs. I have attempted to expoſe the Reputation of an Engliſh Woman of Quality. I ſhou'd be ſorry to think the Actions of any of our Ladies ſuch as cou'd give room for a Conjecture of the Reality of what he wou'd ſuſpect. But ſuppoſe there were indeed an Affinity between the Vices I have deſcribed, and thoſe of ſome Woman he knows, (for doubtleſs if there be, ſhe muſt be of his Acquaintance,) I leave the World to judge to whom ſhe is indebted for becoming the Subject of Ridicule, to me for drawing a Picture, whoſe Original is unknown, or to him who writes her Name at the Bottom of it.

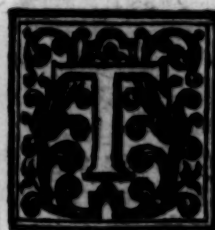
However, if I had deſign'd this as a Satire on any Perſon, whoſe Crimes I had thought worthy of it, I ſhou'd not have thought the Reſentment of ſuch a one conſiderable enough to have obliged me to deny it. But as I have only related a Story, which a particular Friend of mine aſſures me is Matter of Fact, and happen'd at the Time when he was in Paris, I wou'd not have it made uſe of as an Umbrage for the Tongue of Scandal to blaſt the Character of any one, a Stranger to ſuch deteſted Guilt. I hope there is not a ſecond De Tortillée in the World; but if there be, ſhe certainly is not without a Du Lache to to adviſe and aſſiſt her; and he, that Du Lache, who is moſt ſenſible of the Secrets of her Soul, is beſt able to point her out. For my part, (I thank Heaven,) I can ſolemnly proteſt, a Wretch ſo vile never yet reach'd the Obſervation of

ELIZA HAYWOOD.

T H E



THE
INJUR'D HUSBAND:
OR, THE
Mistaken Resentment.



THE Vicissitude of all human Affairs is so absolutely necessary to give Mankind a true Notion of themselves, that he who *seems* most fix'd in Happiness, and fenc'd from every Blast of adverse Fate, sooner or later, is generally led by some unavoidable Impulse to quit his Haven of Peace, and share the Storm in common with those born under less auspicious Influences. The Baron *de Tortillée*, till he was about the Age of Fifty, had pass'd his Time in a perfect Tranquillity; and tho' the Sweetness of his Disposition made him commiserate, and, to the utmost of his Power, assist all who labour'd under any Affliction, yet he himself was wholly insensible what it was to be uneasy: He had from his Infancy been bred at Court, and still continued to frequent it; but as he had preserv'd his Soul untainted with any of those

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modish Vices, which few of the *gay* Part of it are free from, so he also did from that Spirit of Faction, which the *graver* Sort, and those who aim at being thought *Politicians*, are so much sway'd by. He was entirely contented with his Lot, had no ambitious Views, and enjoy'd the Goods of Fortune in that Medium which alone can make Life happy; neither maintaining a Port greater than his Estate would conveniently allow, nor below what was becoming his Quality. This Manner of Behaviour made him unenvy'd by his Equals, esteem'd by those of a superior Rank, and infinitely lov'd by his Inferiors; in fine, never was a Man more universally spoke well of. Thus he *liv'd*, and thus, in all Probability, had he *died*, had not his ill Fortune introduc'd him to the Acquaintance of Mademoiselle *La Motte*, in whose Conversation he found Charms sufficient to make him wish to change his Condition, if by it he cou'd obtain her for a Wife. This was a Lady of none of the meanest Families in *France*, and at the Death of her Father, was left Mistress of a considerable Fortune; but tho' she wanted not Wit, she had been extremely deficient in her Conduct, and the Extravagance of her Expences reduced her in a short Time to have nothing of the Woman of Fashion remaining but a few rich Cloaths; with these, however, and a tolerable Face and Air, she found Means for a good while to escape that, by the Young and Proud, dreaded Evil, the Shew of Poverty. Those on whom before she had bestow'd her Favours *gratis*, were now oblig'd to *purchase*; and as soon as one grew weary of the Bargain, she still had the Address to gain another *Bidder*: Sometimes three or four had an equal Share in the Property; but she had Artifice enough to make each believe himself the sole Possesser. Don *Philip d'Esperanz*, a *Spaniard*, was the last that supported her in this Manner; but he being soon to return to his own Country, where he had a Wife and Family, she was beginning to cast about in her Mind where she shou'd find a fresh Supply, at the Time

when

The Mistaken Resentment. 123

when she first became acquainted with the *Baron*. It is not to be imagin'd, that a Woman, in the Circumstances she then was, wou'd refuse an Offer, which, in all her Bloom of Youth and Innocence, she might have been proud to accept: — No, she knew the World too well; and pretending her speedy Compliance with his Desires was the Effect of a Passion, which Desert, like his, cou'd not but create, deluded the enamour'd *Baron* with a Belief he was the happiest of his Sex; and they contriv'd to huddle up the Wedding in such a Manner, that they were marry'd before any of his Friends had the least Notion there was such a Thing in Agitation. At the first Discovery of it, 'tis hard to say, whether Pity or Amazement had the greatest Share in the Hearts of those who heard it; but being depriv'd of the Opportunity of informing him what she was in time, forbore to let him know the Ruin it was now too late to prevent, and contented themselves with silently commiserating his Condition.

If this Woman had been possess'd of the smallest Grain of Honour, Gratitude, or even common good Nature, she wou'd have endeavour'd, by her future Manner of Behaviour, to retrieve the Errors of the past. — To be taken from a State of Life, which, if not abandon'd by all Sense of Shame, must have been odious to her; — to be reliev'd from all those Terrors which attend Uncertainty; — to be deliver'd from the Insults of the judging World, and those, more galling ones, the Man who *keeps* has a Privilege of inflicting; and rais'd from the lowest and most contemptible Degree of Infamy, to Wealth, to Credit, and to Ease, were Blessings, such as one wou'd think she shou'd have been too sensible of not to acknowledge, and wish, at least, to prove they were not ill bestow'd. But she was wholly dead to such Considerations: She look'd on the large Fortune she was now become Mistress of, only as a larger Means to gratify her Inclinations; and as before she had so much Regard to her Reputation, as to endeavour to

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hinder the World from believing her so vile as she really was, she now gave a Loose to all the Sallies of her ungovern'd Passions, imagining her Quality a sufficient Sanction for her Vices, and that no body would dare to say of the Baroness *De Tortillée*, what they would have made no Scruple to alledge of *Mademoiselle La Motte*.

The Truth is, the *Baron's* singular good Qualities, and affable Behaviour, had gain'd him so universal an Esteem, that, in respect to his Character, (since Custom has made the Errors of the *Wife* a Reflection on the *Husband*,) People were infinitely more sparing of their Censures than otherwise they would have been, or than her Actions indeed deserved. When she was first married, Women of the best Reputation thought it no Scandal to visit her, and be seen abroad with her; and had still continued to do so, if she could have restrain'd her Inclinations within the Bounds of even common Decency: But, alas! she had no Sense of Honour or Decorum, but, behav'd herself in so wild, so dissolute a Manner, that in a little Time none, who but wish'd to be thought virtuous, would take notice of her: The very Men, who gloried not in Debauchery, shunn'd her Acquaintance, or were asham'd to own it. This, which to a Woman capable of any solid Reflection, must have made her look back with Horror on the Vices which had so justly render'd her contemptible, did not in the least alarm her; she still had a Set of Company who humour'd her Vanity, and, indeed, she was easy in no other.

But, oh! how blind is Love! the *Baron* still continued to adore her! So much was he deluded by her Artifices, that even her Vices appeared Virtues; the Profuseness of her Expences seem'd to proceed from a Generosity and noble Magnanimity of Soul, which, however destructive to his Fortune, he could not but applaud: The Liberties she took in her Conversation with Men, pass'd for an innocent Freedom which he could not imagine a Woman really criminal would dare

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dare to make use of. In fine, every Thing she said, every Thing she did, was a new Charm to him; and neither the palpable Neglect which he found the whole World treated her with, nor the Remonstrances which some of his Friends, griev'd at his Infatuation, at last, grew free enough to make him, could oblige him to look with a jealous Eye on her Conduct, or in the least abate his Dotage. Indeed, how little soever she seem'd to regard the rest of the World's taking notice of her Faults, she, for the most part, was cautious enough to prevent him from making any Discovery of them; or, if at any Time, she was conscious of an Irregularity which might occasion his Suspicion, she knew how to bring herself off; she had Sighs, Tears, Swoonings, Languishments, at command: No Woman that ever liv'd was Mistress of more Artifice, nor had less the Appearance of being so: Nature had given her a Countenance extremely favourable for her Purpose; and whenever she was pleas'd to join to those Looks of Sincerity and Innocence any Asseverations that she was so, it was hardly possible to believe her otherwise: Her Voice too had a perswasive Softness in it, which it was very difficult to withstand; and one had need to be perfectly acquainted with her *Actions* before one cou'd distrust her *Words*. And this is all that can be said to vindicate the unhappy *Baron* from that Imputation of Stupidity, which the long Series of his Delusions have drawn upon him.

But to return to her History, which alone can give the Reader any just Notion of her Character: There was among the Number of those who now frequented her Drawing-Room, a Fellow call'd *Du Lache*: He was too disagreeable to be receiv'd in the Quality of a Lover; neither did he visit her with any such View: *Fortune* had been less kind to him than *Nature*, for what he wanted in *Beauty* was abundantly made up in *Cunning*; but he was so wretchedly indigent, that tho' he had been employ'd in the Management of several Intrigues, (for which

no Body was more fit,) he never had met with Persons who thought the Service he did merited the Supply of even the common Necessaries of Life: He was half perish'd for Want, when Chance brought him into the *Baroness's* Acquaintance. They soon found in each other sufficient to create an Intimacy; and she thought herself no less fortunate in engaging to her Interest a Person whose Brain was capable of projecting every Thing, and whose Principle was to scruple nothing, than he did in having it in his Power to oblige a Patroness, whose Humour, he perceiv'd, was not to make scanty Retributions for Service such as his. In a short Time his *Tatters* were exchanged for *Embroidery* and *Brocade*; he had Money in his Pocket; went to Court, to the Opera's, Gaming-Houses, Assemblies; kept Company with Gentlemen; and to those who knew him not before, appeared like one himself. His Business was, in all publick Places, to extol the Wit and Beauty of the *Baroness's Tortillée!* to make all Women appear vile in Competition with *her*; ---if he heard one fam'd for any Excellence, to form some Story to degrade her; ---to break of intended Marriages; ---to render those already wedded the Objects of each other's Hate; and, in fine, wherever he found a noble Friendship between Persons of different Sexes, to endeavour to *disunite*, or make it appear *scandalous*. *Malice* is seldom barren of Invention, and People that apply themselves to this kind of Mischief, have generally a Manner of *insinuating* what they would have believ'd, which *Truth* and *Honesty* disdaining to make use of, are perfect Strangers to. *Du Lache* was so successful in his Employment, that tho' the *Marquis De Somville* had long lov'd, and been belov'd by one of the finest Women of the Age, not all her Charms, her Tendernefs, her Constancy could maintain the Place she held in his Affections, when once attack'd by the Artifices of this subtle Villian: He soon was brought to lessen his *Esteem*; and that destroy'd, all that remains of *Love* is scarce

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scarce worth calling so; *Indifference* immediately succeeds, and the Heart is free to receive the Idea of the first agreeable Object that presents itself. No Body can doubt but that the *Baroness*, for whose sake all this was done, was the Person introduc'd. He was no sooner discover'd to grow cool towards his former Mistress, than he was brought to visit her; and she being extremely desirous of engaging him, and knowing how to form her Behaviour to all Humours, found it no Difficulty to suit herself to his.

She also found her Account in the Addresses of the young Chevalier *St. Aumar*: He was handsome, gay, gallant, and liberal to an Excess: He profess'd publicly his Admiration of her, waited on her wherever she went, treated, and made her very rich Presents. One would think, indeed, that this *last* Article should have but little Sway with a Woman of the Station she now was rais'd to; but, alas! if the *Baron's* Estate had been twice doubled, it would have been too small for those Expences, which, to indulge a Temper such as her's, were absolutely necessary. She was now above making Assignations at any of those mean Places of Entertainment she had formerly been accusom'd to; all must now be done with an Air of *Grandeur*; her *Embroiderer*, her *Milliner*, her *Mantua-Maker*, her *Tire-Woman*, had all of them Houses of their own, handsomely furnish'd at her Charge, and adorn'd fit to receive a *Messalina* equal to the first in Greatness. It must be confess'd that in *this* she was politick enough; for whoever had seen her at any of those People's Houses, would not have believ'd she came thither out of any other Design than to consult about her *Dress*; but then it requir'd almost a *Prince's* Revenue to supply the Demands of those *Creatures*, and purchase the least tolerable Assurance of their Secrecy, The Jewels, therefore, and other valuable Things, which the Prodigality of *St. Aumar* bestow'd on her, were of great Service; for the poor *Baron*, who was always

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pleas'd to see her appear magnificent, imagin'd they were bought with that Money which was really employ'd in Bribery on the Instruments of his Dishonour.

But, tho' she found it very much to the Advantage of her *Interest*, as well as *Pleasure*, to converse with *St. Aumar*, her Acquaintance with *La Sourbe* was infinitely more so to the one, tho' far incapable of the other. He was old, deform'd, diseas'd, and had nothing either in his Person or Address which could render his Caresses supportable to a Woman of any Taste; but the Abundance of his *Wealth* counterballanc'd all other Deficiencies; and this fine Lady receiv'd him in his Turn, with all the Softness and obliging Tenderness that the most lovely of her Admirers thought themselves happy in possessing. 'Twas to them all, indeed, but *feigned*; and therefore the same Arts she practis'd to impose on others might easily be us'd on him; for in reality she never knew what 'twas to love sincerely; and at a Time, when, perhaps there were twenty (tho' *each* believ'd himself the *only* blest'd) who possess'd all the Favours she was capable of bestowing, she was over-heard to say, (to one that was Partner in all her Secrets,) That that Woman was a Fool that ever gave herself the least *real* Uneasiness on the Account of *Love*.--- A Topknot tied amiss, said she, would give me greater Pain than the eternal *Damnation* of all Mankind!--- Not to be *ador'd*, indeed, is not to *live*! and to engage the Assiduity of a Fellow one likes, 'tis necessary to counterfeit a Passion! 'Tis certain she did it with such Success, that the most discerning Eye might have been deceiv'd; how then could *La Sourbe* escape the Snare? He had but little been accusom'd to the Conversation of Women, and was utterly ignorant of the Wiles laid for him:--- He thought himself in Heaven; and could scarce contain his Senses amidst that Profusion of Delight her Wit, her Gaiety, her endearing Softness shower'd upon him. He knew not how, sufficiently, to shew the
Sense

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Sense he had of such a Blessing as her Love, and thought of nothing but the Means of returning it to the utmost of his Power. --- All his Hours, his Fortune, his very Life, was wholly at her Devotion; and she had so absolute a Command over him, and knew so well her Power, that she even made him the Instrument of forwarding her Amours with others. But it was not only to her own Management she was indebted for making this deluded Gentleman subservient to her Ends, *Du Lache*, as in all the rest of her Intrigues, was no inconsiderable Assistant here: He was extremely ready at Invention, had a thousand little Stratagems to prompt decaying Desire, and as many Ways to make the Person whom he found it his Interest to deceive, deaf to all Arguments but those he undertook to maintain.

But notwithstanding all his Cunning, he was extremely put to a Stand, when coming one Morning, as was his Custom, to visit the *Baroness*, and receive her Commands, he found her at her *Toilet*, uneasy to the last Degree: She had two or three Attendants in the Room, whom, as soon as she saw him enter, she dismiss'd, and stepping to him with something of a disorder'd Motion, O *Du Lache*, said she, I have wish'd for you this Hour! --- I am distracted in my Thoughts; and if your hitherto successful Wit should now fail me, I am undone for ever. --- Forbid it Heaven! answer'd he, strangely surpriz'd. Yes, resum'd she, I again repeat it, I am undone, ruin'd for ever, unless you find the Means to help me: --- All in my Power, Madam, added he, you know you may command. Talk not of Power, interrupted she impatiently, this must, --- this shall be in your Power, unless you wish to see me do some desperate Deed: --- If disappointed here, --- in the extreamest Wish my Soul e'er knew, I'll murder you, --- myself, and all who want the Means to ease me. She join'd to these Words so wild a Look and Motion, that *Du Lache* repented he had seem'd to doubt of his Ability to serve her, and endeavour'd to remedy

that Fault, by swearing that he would bring about whatever she employ'd him in, let the Nature or Consequence be what it wou'd. She appear'd something more tranquil at this Assurance, and seating herself, and obliging him to do so; I am satisfy'd, said she, that your Zeal to serve me will carry you to great Lengths; nor do I think, when I have the Power of reflecting, that the Task I now enjoin is at all more difficult than those you have already gone through, with all the Success I cou'd desire; but, alas! continu'd she, beginning to relapse into her former Disorder, the excessive Eagerness with which my Spirits are agitated in Pursuit of the Blessing I wou'd possess, and the certain everlasting Misery I must endure, shou'd my Endeavours fail, confuses, drives me mad: --- My Soul will never know a Moment's Peace, till sure Enjoyment shall destroy Suspence: I cannot rest while there remains a Possibility of being wretched: --- Wretched, did I say? How poor are Words to expresse what 'tis I mean? --- 'Twou'd be a Curse beyond Damnation! --- She utter'd many more the like Extravagancies, till *Du Lache*, a little recover'd from the Astonishment her Behaviour had put him in, interrupted her by saying, That, if to be disappointed of her Aim, wou'd plunge her in such Horrors, the Possession of it must certainly afford her adequate Delight, and begg'd her to think on that, and rely on his Industry to compass it, as soon as she shou'd inform him by what Means. Well then, (said the *Baroness*, composing herself as much as possible,) I will no longer doubt a Management which never yet has fail'd me; nor in the least imagine, that in the Perplexity you see me you will not do your utmost for my Relief: Know then, continu'd she sighing, my present Disorders are occasion'd by a Passion, the Force of which I ne'er before experienc'd. --- Oft have I lik'd, but never, never lov'd till now. --- One fatal Moment has inform'd me more, than all the various Amours of many Years cou'd do. --- Oh! I have seen a Man, whose Looks, whose

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Voice, whose every Motion is Enchantment! --- At the first View my melting Soul dissolv'd; --- but when he talk'd, methought, my very Life flew from me, --- the soft Delight was more than Sense cou'd bear! --- O *Du Lache*, thou know'st this Prodigy of Charms! --- this Wonder of his Sex! --- this more than Angel! --- yet, dull, dull, as thou art, thou never spok'st him as he is! --- Oft have I heard thy Tongue repeat the Name of *Beauclair*; but not with Raptures to enflame Desire! --- Why, too ungrateful Friend, wert thou so careless of my Happiness, as not to let me know that there were Joys in Love beyond all I had already tasted? --- Cou'dst thou, --- tell me, I say, is it owing to thy Stupidity, or the Thanklessness of thy Nature, that thou cou'dst converse with *Beauclair*! the adorable *Beauclair*! without a Wish *Tortillée* might be blest in his Possession! 'Tis impossible to represent the Confusion that *Du Lache* was in, when he heard the Name *Beauclair* mention'd in that Manner: He knew, indeed, that he had all the Perfections that the *Baroness* had describ'd, and was not at all surpriz'd to find her so much more charm'd with him than ever she had appear'd to be with any other; but he knew also, that, all lovely as he was, the *Graces* of his *Mind* were far superior to the *Beauties* of his *Person*, and was sensible there were some Obstacles which he had good Reason to fear wou'd be invincible ones in her way to the Happiness she aim'd at. In the first Place, the Heart of *Beauclair* had long been devoted to a young Lady, fam'd for, and really Mistress of every Excellence that cou'd adorn a Woman; that he was contracted to her before he went to his Travels, (from which he was but lately return'd;) and that there wanted nothing to compleat the solemnizing the Nuptials of this accomplish'd Pair, but the Recovery of a darling Brother, who, at that Time, lay ill of a Fever. But tho' this of itself was sufficient to deter *Du Lache* from entertaining any presumptuous Hopes in Favour of *Tortillée*, yet the Character of *Beauclair* was

was infinitely more so; He had Honour, Constancy, good Nature, and to all these Virtues an excellent Penetration, which render'd it almost an Impossibility to impose upon his Judgment: He plac'd not his Affections on *Montamour*, (for that was the Name of his intended Bride,) without a perfect Knowledge how worthy she was of them: And the Charms of the one, and the Wisdom of the other, was a Bulwark which this insidious Villain fear'd wou'd be impregnable to all the Stratagems his Cunning cou'd invent. The Vexation this Consideration gave him kept him from making an immediate Answer to what the *Baroness* had said, till guessing the true Reason of his Silence, she prosecuted her Discourse in this Manner. I wonder not, resum'd she, that you appear disorder'd at the Request I make: A Lady who sat by me last Night at the *Opera*, where I beheld this Idol of my Soul, gave me his whole History; and I suppose 'tis his Engagement with *Montamour* makes you doubtful how far you may be able to prevail in Behalf of *Tortillée*. You think, perhaps, *her* Charms maintain too forcible a Lustre to be eclips'd by *mine*, and are unwilling to embark in a Design which you imagine cannot easily be accomplish'd; but know, (continu'd she with a Frown,) that I am resolv'd to triumph over this happy Rival, or die in the Attempt: --- Therefore contrive some Means, and that this Moment too, to make me blest, or be assur'd I will not brook the Disappointment unreveng'd. *Du Lache*, who knew the natural Obstinacy of her Temper, made much more so by the Violence of her present Desires, found it wou'd be altogether fruitless to set before her Eyes the little Likelihood there was for her to succeed: All he cou'd do, was to entreat her Patience, and protest by all the Oaths he cou'd invent, that he wou'd exert his utmost Abilities to procure the Satisfaction she requir'd: And perceiving nothing but an absolute Dependance cou'd make her less desperate, he was oblig'd to give her Hopes, (which himself believ'd were but fallacious,)

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cious,) that in a few Days she shou'd be in Possession of all her Soul was bent on.

It was now that he found himself in the greatest Perplexity he had ever been in all his Life: The more he consider'd on the Promise he had made, the less Probability there appear'd of making it good; and to fail, he knew wou'd ruin him with the *Baroness* for ever: His *present Subsistence*, and his Hopes of making his *future Fortune*, depended on her Favour; and he grew almost distracted, when, after a thousand various Projections, he cou'd find none that seem'd feasible to preserve it. He endeavour'd, however, to delay the Misfortune he dreaded, and by concealing his inward Perturbations, and always, in her Presence appearing with his former Gaiety, made her indeed believe he really had found the Means of doing what she expected from him. To divert her Thoughts as much as possible from *Beauclair*, he never suffer'd her to be alone; and whenever the *Baron's* Absence gave them an Opportunity, he contriv'd that either the *Marquis De Sonville*, the *Chevalier St. Aumar*, or *Monsieur La Sourbe*, or some one or other of her *Devotees*, shou'd be perpetually with her. But all this was of but little Efficacy; she was so far of the Humour of *Mankind*, that if *Beauclair* had been less agreeable yet he was *unenjoy'd*, and therefore most desirable. She was willing, however, to trifle away the Time in these Amusements, till that happy Moment shou'd arrive, which was to give her more extatick Joys: And knowing the Subtily of *Du Lache*, and how much it was his Interest to oblige her, did not greatly doubt but that some way or other he wou'd bring it about. The Truth is, it ever was uppermost in his Thoughts; but he found so little likelihood that any Efforts he shou'd make wou'd meet with Success, that he was beginning to despair; when, on a sudden, his prompting *Friend*, which seldom left him long unaided, put it into his Head, that *Mademoiselle Sansfoy* might be of Use in the Mischief he endeavour'd. This was a Lady whose
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extream Love of hearing herself speak, made her often the Instrument of both Good and Ill, without any Intention of her own to serve the End of either : She had a great deal of *Vanity* in her *Nature*, and therefore could not be without an equal Share of *Coquetry* in her *Behaviour*; and as she was excessive fond of being admir'd by the *Men*, could not be capable of any real Regard for the *Women*. She took a vast Pleasure in picquing any one more aimable than herself, and was never so happy as when she had the Power of giving Pain. She dress'd well, was young, gay, and perfectly well shap'd, had very regular Features, and a most delicate Complexion; --- and to all this an uncommon Quickness of Apprehension, and a ready Thought, and a free and easy Delivery of her Words, and an entertaining Turn in Conversation, which made her Company every where desir'd. She was acquainted both with *Beauclair* and *Montamour*, and had with the latter as great an Intimacy as the Difference of their Humours would permit. It was not difficult for a Person of much less Discernment than *Du Lache* to find out what Manner of Address would be most acceptable to this fine Lady : He had several Times happen'd to meet her at a Place where he had visited, and from that took the Liberty of going to see her at her House: He wanted not Words to *excuse*, nor she good Humour to *forgive* the Boldness; and perceiving himself favourably receiv'd, after a thousand Encomiums on her Beauty had usher'd in the Discourse, he told her, That nothing had ever so much the Power of giving him Surprise as that *Beauclair*, who had seen the Wonders of her Charms, could so far wrong his Judgment, and the good Opinion the World had of his Wit, to give *Montamour* the Preference in his Esteem. It must be confess'd, indeed, said this subtle Detractor, that she has lovely Eyes, a fine Shape and Air, a vast deal of Wit, and, where *Sansfoy* is absent, is Mistress of a thousand soul-attracting Graces; but when you both appear together, I cannot help believing that *Beau-*
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clair, and all (as many such there are) who think like him, are blind. He very well knew the Effect these Words would produce; and that a Woman of the Temper she was, to whom they were directed, is not so angry with the *Praiser* as the *Prais'd*. *Sansfoy* immediately grew pale with Envy; and imagining that what *Du Lache* had said of the Passion of *Beauclair* for *Montamour*, only express'd a mannerly Commiseration of her Want of Charms, who had not Power to engage him, was ready to burst with inward Spite all the Time he had been talking; till, able to contain no longer, I know not (said she, with a disdainful Toss of her Head) how *many* there may be of *Beauclair's* Mind in his Admiration of *Montamour*, but I am very sure that *none*, besides himself, take any Pains to be well in her Esteem; and, perhaps, the little Interruption he has to fear in his Addresses there, is the greatest Inducement to his making 'em. *Security*, added she, is a valuable Article in *Marriage*, and as he designs her for a *Wife*, Housewifery, Silence, Meekness, Obedience, and Humility, are the Accomplishments he thinks most necessary. But Madam, (resum'd *Du Lache*, rejoic'd he had wrought her to a Disposition proper for his Purpose,) do you really believe this seeming virtuous Lady is what she appears to be? Is there no favourite Lover, who in the dark triumphs over *Beauclair*? --- I have heard odd Stories, which yet bear a Possibility of Truth. --- For Heaven's sake, what? (interrupted *Sansfoy* eagerly,) who is the Man? Pardon me Madam, answered he, I dare not make Reports, which I am not sure may not be fabulous. --- I would not for the World be guilty of Injustice: --- Nay, tho' I knew all I have been told were positively true, I am too tender of Ladies Honour to repeat it. The natural Curiosity which always made her inquisitive into the Affairs of every Body, pointed now with Malice, fill'd her with perfect Agonies; she would have given almost a Limb to be let into this Secret, and the greater Unwillingness he pretended

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tended to divulge it, the more she grew impatient to discover it. She entreated him with so much Earnestness, and so many Conjurations, that at last he seem'd won by 'em, and told her a long Story which he had before invented; the Sum of which was, That Monsieur *Galliard* had long been an Admirer, and in secret possess'd all the Favours that *Montamour* could give. The Reason why this artful Villain made this Gentleman a Property to further his Designs, was, that he knew *Sansfoy* had a prodigious Desire to engage him, and of Consequence wou'd more industriously blaze abroad the Scandal he aim'd at, than if he had mention'd a Person more indifferent to her: He knew also that he had been acquainted with *Montamour* from her Childhood; that he was accounted of an amorous Disposition; and that he profess'd an extraordinary Friendship for that Lady. And tho' there needed not all these Probabilities to make the censorious *Sansfoy* believe all he said, yet he was sensible there was Occasion for many more, and stronger, to oblige the rest of the World to entertain an ill Opinion of a Woman who had ever behav'd with an exemplary Discretion.

This was the first Step *Du Lache* had made toward the disuniting the Affections of these two amiable Persons; the next was to ingratiate himself as much as possible with *Beauclair*. He had a good Voice, and Judgment in Musick; and being told that Gentleman was a great Admirer of it, found means to oblige him to a liking of his Conversation, by presenting him with some fine Compositions, which he pretended had been sent him by some of the best Masters in *Italy*, whom he kept a Correspondence with. Not all *Beauclair's* Wisdom could defend his good Nature from being deluded by the Artifice of this common Traytor to all Honour and Virtue; he became extremely pleas'd with him; and far from suspecting his Designs, let him into all his Affairs with a Freedom which some Time after he found he had sufficient Reason to repent. One Day as they
were

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were alone together, he told him he had been the Night before at *Montamour's*; that *Sansfoy* was with her; and staying till it was late, he had waited on her Home; that as they went, she had given him some Hints he was not so happy in the Affections of his Mistress as she had made him hope; and that *Galliard* was mention'd by her in a Manner which, tho' he was not inclinable to Jealousy, had given him much Disquiet. 'Twas with a vast deal of Satisfaction that *Du Lache* found his Plot had so well succeeded on *Sansfoy*, and now began to hope there was a Possibility of deceiving them all, by the same means he had done her: He dissembled his Sentiments, however, and seem'd to regard what *Beauclair* had told him, but as a Thing in which he had no manner of Concern, tho' all the Time he was in his Company, his Invention was at work how to make the best Use of what he heard; and having hit on a Thought which seem'd to be a lucky one, disengag'd himself as soon as possible, and went about the Execution of it.

He saw that with Wisdom, Honour, Generosity, Sweetness of Disposition, and a thousand shining Qualities which made up the Character of *Beauclair*, there were certain Frailties mix'd, which prov'd him not absolutely Divine. From their last Conversation, he gather'd, that an Impatience of Indignities, and a too great Aptitude to credit all Reports that shou'd be made him, gave Treachery an advantageous Ground to dart her Arrows from; and perceiving that those little Reflections *Sansfoy* had made, had been sufficient to give him Pain, he resolv'd to strengthen what she said, by Proofs which shou'd wear the Appearance of Infallibility.

Toncarr and *Le Songe* were Men that had no other Dependance than their Wits; and if employ'd in any Design which they found it their Interest to undertake, thought it the least of their Business to enquire whether it were honourable, or not. A publick Oath, or private Assassination, were what at any Time a Prospect

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Prospect of Advantage wou'd lead them to. *Du Lache* was perfectly acquainted with their Principles, and in his Days of Poverty had been one of their Associates, and therefore made no doubt but he shou'd find them both willing and able to serve him in his present Affair. The Moment he left *Beauclair* he sent for 'em to his Lodgings; and having communicated the whole Matter to them, and receiv'd their Promises of Assistance, they all together agreed on a Stratagem, which was accordingly executed the next Morning in the Manner following:

Du Lache went pretty early to give the *Bonjour* to *Beauclair* at his Lodgings; and after some little Discourse of ordinary Affairs, ask'd that Gentleman, whom he knew to be a Lover of it, to walk with him, it being a Morning full of Temptation. The Proposition was agreeable; and as soon as he was dress'd they went together on Foot towards the *Low-vre*, designing for the Gardens: But as they turn'd the Corner of a little back Lane, which carried them to the great Street before the Palace, they heard a sudden Clash of Swords; and immediately saw two Men engag'd in so furious a Manner, as if each had vow'd the other's Death: But one of them seem'd less skilful in the Use of his Weapon, and was press'd upon by his Adversary with so much Advantage, that, in all Appearance, he must have fallen, or yielded, if *Beauclair* and *Du Lache*, no other Persons happening to be near, had not run in to his Relief. The Moment they advanc'd, the Person that seem'd to be the Foil'd, took to his Heels, and was immediately out of Sight: His Antagonist made an offer of pursuing, yet not so eagerly but that he was easily withheld by *Beauclair*, who asking what had been the Occasion of their Quarrel, and how it happen'd that they had made Choice of a Place so unfit for their Purpose, cou'd get no other Answer from him, than that he was undone! and that to have been hinder'd from pursuing the Person with whom he had been fighting, was a more cruel Misfortune than the Loss

of

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of his Life wou'd have been, had the other got the better. *Beauclair* was prodigiously amaz'd at these Words: He cou'd not imagine that a Fellow of the Rank he appear'd to be, (being dress'd after the Manner of a Valet,) cou'd have so nice a Sense of Honour as to prefer it to his Life, and had a great Curiosity to know of what Nature this Affair was; which made him extremely pleas'd when *Du Lache*, pretending an equal Astonishment, press'd the Man to relate it. At last, seemingly overcome by the Perswasions of Gentlemen to whom he ow'd his Safety, he told 'em, (after he had engag'd their Promises never to reveal the Secret he was about to intrust 'em with,) That he was a Dependant on Monsieur *Galliard*, had formerly liv'd with him, and was now employ'd by him in the Conduct of an Amour which, if discover'd, wou'd certainly be of fatal Consequence. The young Lady, said he, with whom my Master (for I still call him so) is enamour'd, is of Quality, and has a Brother whom the least Occasion of Suspicion wou'd set on fire for the Honour of his Family. Every Body knows the Temper of Mademoiselle *Galliard*, that she is one of the most jealous Women on Earth; and being fix'd in a Belief that she is not so well in her Husband's Affections as she cou'd wish, makes it her whole Study to find out what Woman is the Cause, for some such one she is sure there is, and if discover'd will not fail to expose her in the most gross and shameful Manner imaginable. Now you must know, Messieurs, (continu'd he,) that this Lady being pretty closely observ'd by the Brother I told you of, and a Gentleman whom she is shortly to be married to, cannot oblige my Master with her Conversation, neither so frequently nor so long as both of 'em desire; but his Impatience had contriv'd a Way to remedy that Misfortune. He provided a little Ladder of Ropes, which she fastening to her Window, he might easily enter, and pass a whole Night with her. This very Ladder, and a Letter appointing the Hour he was to go,

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go, I was this Morning to deliver to her; but, O unlucky Accident! *Mademoiselle*, whether she overheard the Orders he was giving me, or whether she only suspected my so often coming to the House, and being in private with my Master, was on some such Design, I know not, but she immediately sent a Fellow, a Creature entirely at her Devotion, after me, who following me without my taking Notice, or in the least imagining he was behind me, till we came into this Bye-Lane, where he snatch'd my Bundle from me, which, unsuspecting any such Thing, I held carelessly in my Hand, he immediately whipp'd it into his Pocket, and drawing his Sword to defend his Prize, perceiving I was doing the same to recover it, engag'd me in the Manner in which you found us.

There was a visible Alteration in *Beauclair's* Countenance from the first Moment this Fellow mention'd the Name of *Galliard*; but when he heard him say the Lady, to whom he should have deliver'd the Ladder of Ropes, had a *Brother*, and that she was in a short Time to be married, his Face seem'd dy'd in Crimson, his Eyes shot Fire, and wild Impatience distorted every Feature. With what a Pleasure *Du Lache* observ'd it, the Reader will easily imagine; for I believe none will be so stupid, as not to see that this was the Contrivance which had been form'd the Night before; and that those Fellows who seem'd such Foes, were no other than *Le Songe* and *Toncarr*, who had confederated with the other, and invented this Story, which was likely enough to confirm the Suspicions *Beauclair* had already, thro' *Sansfoy's* Suggestions, conceiv'd of the unblameable *Montamour*. This artful Villain, to farther the base Design so successfully begun, immediately cry'd out in a seeming Astonishment, O Heavens! This Lady whom you have been speaking of, is no other than *Montamour*, and this Gentleman, to whom with me you have been discovering her Weakness, the very Man who was design'd to make her happy in a Husband. A thousand Circumstances

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stances concur to make me know my Fears are but too true. --- What have I done? (return'd the other with a well counterfeited Terror,) what have I said? --- Wretch that I am, --- has my unwary Tongue let slip ought that may discover what my Master would not for his Soul have known? --- has any inadvertent Word escap'd me, that give you Reason to imagine 'tis *Montamour* who is enamour'd of *Galliard* to so high a Degree, that for his sake she can consent to suffer Freedoms, such as I have been speaking of? --- O too, too sure! (continued he tearing his Hair,) I am by some fatal Accident made guilty; the Secret of my Master is betray'd; the Lady is expos'd; and we are all ruin'd! No, no, (said *Beauclair*, assuming as much as possible his accustom'd Serenity of Countenance,) you are so far from being guilty of any Thing that can be call'd a Crime, that in making this Discovery, tho' undesign'd by you, you have oblig'd a Gentleman who never will be ungrateful. Take this, (added he, giving him a Purse of Gold,) and ever be assur'd to find a Friend in *Beauclair*. The Fellow seem'd to start at the Name of *Beauclair*; and, after having several Times repeated, Good God, is it possible! fell on his Knees, entreating him, that in what Manner soever he express'd his Resentments, that he would take no notice of him in the Affair. I am an unfortunate Gentleman, added he, who have a large Family, and no other Dependance than the Favour of my Master; and as it was not thro' Design, but Accident, I have made you acquainted with this History, (little suspecting, Heaven knows, how deeply you were interested in it,) I beg my unhappy Children may not suffer for the Folly of their Father; for sure, I am, if *Monsieur Galliard* should know it is from me you learned the Secret, my Life would be the first Sacrifice he would offer to his Mistress's Reputation. All the Rage of Temper which *Beauclair* had been endeavouring to quell, return'd at this last Word, with greater Violence than ever, and wholly unable to contain his Fury ---
His

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His Mistress! interrupted he, O Damnation on the Thought! Ten thousand Fiends torture her false deceiving Soul: — Curse on her treacherous Charms, — her counterfeited Modesty, — her cool Reserve! — the Jilt, — the Hypocrite! Was there no Man but me to have made a Property? — Am I, of all my Sex, chose out as fittest for the Cover of her secret Lewdness? He would doubtless have vented the o'er-boiling Passions of his Mind in many more such like Exclamations, if *Du Lache* had not reminded him of the Place they were in, and entreated him to conceal his Disorders till he should come into one where Privacy should more conveniently permit him to indulge them. *Beauclair* thank'd him for this friendly Admonition, and turning to *Le Songe*, (for it was he who had entertain'd him with this fine Invention,) bad him be easy; for whatever he should determine to revenge the Wrongs *Galliard* had done him, it should never be known by what Means he made a Discovery of them. *Du Lache* parted from his confederate Villain with an applauding Smile, for the Success of an Enterprize which they promis'd themselves to be very merry at hereafter, and follow'd *Beauclair*, who, with an Air that spoke his inward Agitations, was walking toward the Palace-Gardens. They took two or three Turns there; but the Charms of the Morning having drawn a good deal of Company, it grew troublesome to this distracted Lover: He went home again, and giving Orders not to be disturb'd, shut himself into his Cloiet with *Du Lache*. It was now this subtle Insinuator had an Opportunity of making every Thing appear as he would have it. The prudent and reserv'd Behaviour which render'd *Montamour* an envy'd Example to all the young Ladies of her Time, by his Suggestions now seem'd all Artifice; and the Heart which had so long, and so justly paid Homage to her as the most truly adorable of her Sex, was now brought to consider her as the vilest. At first his Resolutions were to send a Challenge to

Galliard;

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Galliard; but his mischevious Adviser, with Reason, fearing that if they fought, which ever got the better, such an Encounter might produce an *Eclaircissement* sufficient to detect his Villany, perswaded him, that as she had render'd herself unworthy of his *Affection*, she also had of his *Regard*; and that it was too much to hazard his Life in a Cause which when known, could neither add to his Honour, or restore that of the Person for whom he fought. To what End, *Monsieur*, said he, should you engage in a Quarrel of this Nature? *Galliard* is not a Rival, whose Addresses *may*, but already *have* obtain'd every Thing to the Prejudice of your Passion; and should your Sword have all the Advantages you could desire, what would it avail? *Montamour* would not be less unsullied; his Blood could never wash her Stains away, nor could his Death give back that Virtue which alone can make her worthy of your Love. He us'd many more Arguments of this Nature; and finding the other inclinable to listen to every Thing he said, Methinks, resum'd he, it better would become a Passion injur'd to that Degree yours is, to pay the Injustice with Scorn than Anger; — and since Heaven, by a Means so unexpected, has given you a perfect Knowledge of her Perfidy, to imagine you will still continue any Professions of Tenderness there, would be to harbour the most despicable Notions of your Understanding; to desist from them, without condescending to give her any Reasons for so doing, would be the most galling Revenge you can take: — Let all those who have seen your *Adorations*, be Witness of your *Contempt*; — if Chance should bring you into her Presence, behold her with *Indifference*; — speak of her with *Disdain*; and, if possible, think of her as she deserves, with *Hate*: Or, (continu'd he, perceiving *Beauclair* could not forbear sighing at that Word,) if that is a Task too difficult to be accomplish'd presently, *feign* at least to do so. — Believe me, who am perfectly well acquainted with the Humour of the Sex, that nothing

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is so great a Shock as cool Indifference :--- *Rage*, tho' express'd in the rudest Manner, still discovers there are Remains of Passion in the Heart which harbours it, and only feeds the Pride of her 'tis vented on; but a *sedate*, an *unregarding* Air, stabs the vain *Coquette* in the tenderest Part. You speak my Sense, answered *Beauclair*; I do not believe any Thing so truly stinging to Womankind, as when they find their Power of creating Inquietudes are past; and yet (cried he after a Pause) I ne'er observ'd in *Montamour* that Humour; --- but (added he, changing his Voice) she is all Artifice, --- all damn'd Deceit, and knows how to dress the worst of Vices with a Shew of Virtue: *Du Lache*, I hate her, by Heaven I do, --- and she shall know I do: --- I'll write and tell her so this very Moment. Alas! reply'd he, how little is a Soul, in the Condition yours is, capable of judging of its own Conceptions; --- To say you *hate*, is to confess you *love*; --- for Heaven's sake do not thus unman yourself; --- if you must write, let it be --- What? interrupted *Beauclair*. I wish, rejoin'd the other, you'd give me leave to dictate. With all my Heart, (answered he,) write what you think most proper, --- what you yourself in the like Circumstance would say; but take care, be sure not to let slip one Word which may look like Tendernefs, and I will copy it over, and send it to her strait.

Thus did this unsuspecting Gentleman, blinded by Passion, and sooth'd by the base Arts of the most treacherous of all Villains, join in the Deceit against himself, and aid the Ruin of his own Hopes. *Du Lache* was too assiduous in Mischief to give him Time for Reflection; and taking Pen and Paper immediately writ in this Manner;

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To Mademoiselle MONTAMOUR.

TH^O nothing is more base than for the Tongue or Pen to make Professions of a Passion which the Heart is a Stranger to, yet nothing is more in fashion even among those who pretend to the greatest Honour of both Sexes; but as I resolve to be for ever out of it, so I will not accuse you, because I will not give you the Trouble of endeavouring at a Justification, which will be altogether vain.

This, therefore, comes to bid you an eternal Adieu; wishing you a long Series of Contentment in those Amusements you are pleas'd, at present, to place your Felicity in; and that the Memory of what has pass'd between us, may not hereafter afford a more just Occasion of Disquiet to you, than to the

Once passionate

BEAUCLAIR.

This being extremely approv'd of by *Beauclair*, was immediately copied over by him, and sent to *Montamour*; but notwithstanding the Rage he was in, and the seeming Reason he had to be so, the Respect he had always been accusom'd to pay this Lady, not all his Belief of her Unworthiness cou'd utterly erase: He could not bring himself to treat her in this Manner, without giving to his own Soul a Shock the most sensible it could sustain; and tho' he was perswaded to an Assurance that what he did was entirely right, he could not do it without Agonies inexpressible.

But if the *Sender* of these cruel Lines felt such Disquiets, how infinitely more terrible must their Influence be on the unfortunate *Receiver*, the innocent, injur'd *Montamour*? Tho' her Modesty, and the natural Reservedness of her Temper had kept her

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from making such violent Declarations of her Passion, as many of her Sex are too apt to do, yet never Woman lov'd to a greater or more sublime Degree: Had Life and *Beauclair's* Satisfaction been at stake, she would have made no Scruple to relinquish the one, if by it she might have purchas'd him the other: With such a Profusion of Tenderness she regarded him, that her whole Soul was taken up, and render'd incapable of any other Thought; nor had she, till this unhappy Moment, thro' the Course of her Affection ever met with the least Cause to make her wish she could be less devoted to him. How prodigious then, how much beyond what *Words* can represent, or even *Thought*, unfeeling it, conceive, must be her Astonishment, her Grief, her Indignation, at these distracting Lines! It was but two Days since he had parted from her with all the Tokens of a soul-raptur'd Passion, and what now cou'd move him to abjure it, and renounce his Vows, was something so amazing, that it seem'd impossible. --- She could not presently believe her Eyes: --- She read the fatal Scroll again and again; and being perfectly assur'd it was his *Hand*, had not the least Hold for Hope his Heart was untainted with the Vices common to his Sex. --- She found herself utterly abandon'd; the Letter told her so, in Words too plain to suffer her to make a Doubt of it; and what she endur'd in that Reflection, none, but those in the like Circumstance, can guess. The Hints he gave, that she plac'd her Felicity in Amusements in which he had no Part, she consider'd as the common Artifice of Mankind, who, when they no longer find it to their Satisfaction to continue their Professions, to veil their own Inconstancy and Levity of Nature, throw the Odium on the Person they forsake; and in this View he appeared so black, that for some Moments she found Ease in Hate: Stripp'd of those Graces (said she to herself) which distinguish'd him from the rest of Men, and which alone cou'd excuse the Idolatry of my fond Soul, I should deserve the Contempt

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Contempt he treats me with, shou'd I persist to love; --- No, I'll despise him, drive him from my Heart for ever, --- ingrateful as he is, --- unworthy even of my Remembrance. This Resolution seem'd, indeed, most consonant to *Reason*; but, alas! how little are the Slaves of *Love* capable of obeying such Dictates? The Weakness of her Sex, or rather the Weakness of her Passion, threw her immediately into soft Complaining: *Beauclair's* ten thousand Charms, his flowing Wit, his sweet enchanting Air, his tender Protestations, Languishments, and Vows, all came fresh into her Mind, and Streams of Tears put out the Fire of Rage. It was about Noon when she receiv'd this surprising Letter; and altogether unfit for Conversation, she was oblig'd to feign herself indispos'd, to avoid dining with her Brother, who liv'd in the House with her, and was but just recovering from a long Fit of Sickness. The Necessity she had of shunning his Presence till she had a little overcome her Disorders, was no small Addition to them: The Marriage Ceremony between her and *Beauclair* waited only for this Gentleman's Return of Health, and what Pretence she shou'd make for breaking it off, she knew not; for the Thought of telling him in what Manner she was us'd by her ungrateful Lover was insupportable, not out of a womanish Pride of disdaining to confess she had been forsaken, but because she knew not how far and how fatally his Resentment might transport him in the Vindication of a Sister affronted in so unpardonable a Manner. If her Tenderness for *Beauclair* had, by his late Behaviour, been render'd less prevalent, she had a Generosity in her Soul which made her look upon Revenge as a Passion justly to be abhor'd; and how to prevent it, her Brother being naturally violent, gave her Disturbances little inferior to her others. She had also a long and uneasy Debate within herself in what Terms she should answer those Lines which had made so sudden an Alteration in her Fate, or whether she ought to answer them at all; and the

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Uncertainty in what Way it was best for her to proceed in an Affair so every way distracting, took from her the Power of doing any Thing for some Time.

Tho' 'tis possible whatever she had writ *Du Lache* might have found Means to confute, and by construing her Words turn'd 'em to favour his Design, yet her Silence furnish'd him with an Opportunity of perswading *Beauclair*, that it was not only an Argument of her Guilt, but also, that had she but the least Desire to retain a Place in his Affections, she wou'd have made a Tryal of her Power, and endeavour'd to regain him: Her taking no notice of your Letter, (said he,) is a Proof that she rejoices in an Occasion to break with you; and thinks to be esteem'd by you is of so little Consequence, that she will not be at the Pains of one Invention (of which her Brain is sufficiently stor'd) to purchase it. With these kind of Suggestions he was always at his Ear, haunted him like his Shadow wheresoever he went, and never suffer'd his Resentments, by a Moment's Cessation, to grow cool, till he thought he had entirely brought about his End of extirpating all Remembrances which might rise in his Soul in favour of *Montamour*.

Things being in this favourable Position, he thought it now high Time to introduce the *Baroness* into his Acquaintance: He had often mention'd her to him as a Person the most extraordinary of her Sex, and every now and then took Occasion to tell him he had several Times heard her speak the Name of *Beauclair* with a kind of Transport. Were she unmarried, (said the cunning Villian,) and Mistress of an Empire, the Admiration she pays your Virtues (for she is no Stranger either to your Person or Character) would most certainly entitle you to share it with her. There are very few People, if any, of either Sex, tho' never free from what we call Vanity, that feel not a secret Pleasure in hearing themselves prais'd; and indeed where such a Desire is not immoderate,
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it is rather an Argument of a *noble*, than a *base* Nature. Ambition is laudable when it extends no farther than to excel in those Qualities which may render us agreeable to Society, serviceable to the World, and pleasing to Heaven; but when, disregarding the *Substance*, and grasping at the *Shadow*, we aim only at the *Reputation* of a Perfection, without taking any Pains to make us *worthy* of it, 'tis idle *Ostentation*, and often draws the Owner into worse Vices, *Envy* and *Detraction*. Such a Person can hardly endure another to be spoke well of; whereas the other hears his Companion extoll'd with no other Uneasiness than a secret Indignation against himself; for either his Inability, or Want of Application to attain those Virtues he finds so universally applauded. *Beauclair* cou'd not be possess'd of ten thousand inimitable Graces, and be ignorant they merited Admiration; and tho' he was so accusom'd to create it, that he cou'd not be much transported at what *Du Lache* told him of the *Baroness*, yet the Sweetness of his Disposition made him always think himself oblig'd to the good Opinion of any one, much more to a Lady's, of whom he heard such Wonders. He seem'd very well pleas'd to encourage an Acquaintance with her; and the rather, because he hop'd the Conversation of a Woman so agreeable and witty, as she had been represented, might be a Means more effectual to drive *Montamour* from his Thoughts, than he found all the Efforts he had been able to make.

The Day which was appointed for him to accompany *Du Lache* in his Visit to her being arriv'd, it is not to be doubted but that, having Notice of it, she took all imaginable Care to appear aimable in his Eyes: If there be any Charm which Art and Study can acquire, neither was here wanting to procure it: Her Dress, her Looks, and her Behaviour, were all fram'd to please; and having thoroughly inform'd herself by *Du Lache* what best wou'd suit his Humour, she threw the vain *Coquette* entirely off, and

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wore the Appearance of the Woman of *Honour*. --- Her Carriage, tho' affable and complaisant, was all on the Reserve; nor did she (so exact was she in Diffimulation) in the least Word or Action, all the Time he stay'd with her, swerve from the most nice Punctilio of Modesty. They parted extremely satisfy'd with each other: He consider'd her an agreeable Acquaintance, and she him, as a Man, whom in Time she might be able to subdue.

After this, they had frequent Interviews, sometimes at her own House, and sometimes at *Mademoiselle D'ourier's*, where *Du Lache* had also introduc'd him, as if it were by Chance, and not with any Design of meeting the *Baronefs*; tho' this indeed was one of those Places of Rendezvous before mention'd: But tho' his Carriage was full of Gallantry and Complaisance, yet neither his Words nor Actions had any Symptoms of that Passion she was ambitious of inspiring, and which alone could make her easy. To inform this Dulness of Nature (as she accounted it,) she began to lessen her Reserve, and assuming an Air all soft and tender, talk'd to him, and look'd on him with that sort of kind Concern as is usual between the most near and affectionate Relations; and believing it necessary to give some little Hints that there was something yet more endearing in her Soul, would now and then let fall a Word, cast an amorous Glance, and vent a Sigh, as if it had escap'd her in spite of her Endeavours to restrain it. In fine, she manag'd with such Artifice, that he must have been as *insensible* as he was really *discerning*, not to have perceiv'd she lov'd him; but the Reluctance with which she seem'd to let any Thing slip which might give him Cause to imagine he had made an Impression on her, extremely heighten'd his Esteem; and tho' he had not been able to drive the Idea of *Montamour* so much out of his Mind as to be capable of entertaining a new Flame, yet he could not help feeling a secret Satisfaction in the Influence he found he had over a Soul

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Soul so nicely virtuous, and full of noble Sentiments, as he believ'd hers to be. The good Opinion he had of her, may, perhaps, seem strange, considering in what a vastly different Light her Character appear'd in the Eyes of most People; but till *Du Lache* (who had taken care to prepossess him with Notions all to her Advantage) introduc'd him to her, he was utterly unacquainted either with her Fame or Person. His Travels had taken him up some Years, and since his Return to *Paris*, his Engagement with *Montamour*, and the sincere Tenderness he had for her, entirely engross'd all his Hours, and left him not a Moment to throw away on Enquiries after any other Woman; and as the Sweetness of his Disposition made him always ready to think the best of every Body, it is not to be wonder'd at, that for a Time he was deceiv'd into a Belief of the *Baroness's* Virtue.

But the Respect which his too-favourable Opinion had inspir'd him with, was far from forwarding what her Wishes aim'd at: She easily perceiv'd it, and truly judging by the Fire she observ'd in his Composition, by the tender Languor which sometimes trembled in his shining Eyes, and by the Air of all his Motions, that he was no Enemy to soft Desires, and that the distant Complaisance with which he treated her, was more owing to the Belief he had, that to offer at a nearer Familiarity wou'd not be receiv'd, than to any Dislike to her, or Coldness in his own Nature, she resolv'd to act in such a Manner for the future, as should let him see that it was impossible for him to presume beyond a Pardon. She communicated her Intention to *Du Lache*, and order'd him, that on all Opportunities he shou'd hint to *Beauclair* something of her Passion, seem to be surpris'd at the Discovery he made of it, and pity the Conflicts he must imagine she endur'd between her Virtue and Desire. He extremely approv'd of what she said, and obey'd her Commands with such Success, that by what he told him, and by what

himself had of late gather'd from the *Baroness's* Behaviour, the other was convinc'd it would be no Difficulty to obtain from that Lady the greatest Condescension he cou'd require. If thus encourag'd he had refus'd to take the Advantages were offer'd him, he either must not have been a *Man*, or of a Soul much more refin'd than Man is ordinarily possess'd of. Tho' *Vanity* and *Curiosity* wear the Name of *Female Foibleſſes*, yet they are often (without any other Incitement) the Occasion of making the most deserving Woman lament the Inconstancy of her Husband, or Lover. But to those two Motives, *Beauclair* had, indeed, a third: The Desire of banishing as much as possible all Remembrance of a Person he thought so utterly unworthy as *Montamour*, and, as he has since confess'd, and as by the rest of his Character one may reasonably believe, this last was the most prevailing Argument which induc'd him to imagine an Affair like this cou'd be of any Consequence to his Happiness. But notwithstanding all that his Resentments to *Montamour*, or that Levity of Nature (too incident to his Sex) cou'd suggest, his Inclinations were not so much upon the Wing as to engage him to make any great Haste to prosecute the Consummation of it; and he had, perhaps, delay'd so long, till something had happen'd to prevent all Desires of attempting it, if the Lady's Impatience had not made her take such Measures as, in a manner, oblig'd him to declare himself.

One Evening as they were alone together at *Mademoiselle D'ourier's*; (*Du Lache* having excus'd himself from waiting on *Beauclair*,) she, artfully waving all other Subjects of Conversation, turn'd it in such a manner, that it more wore the Face of *Chance* than *Design*, into an Argument on the Force of *Love*: She pretended to prove that whatever Indecorums were the Consequences of that Passion, they were wholly *unavoidable*, and therefore cou'd not but be *pardonable*. A Man must have been very uncourtly, indeed, that, whatever his Thoughts were, wou'd have

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have disputed with a Lady on that Topick; *Beau-clair* was more gallant; and believing that if ever he desir'd any greater Testimonies of the Conquest he had made of her Heart, than what her Eyes declar'd, now was the Time to obtain them: He catch'd her suddenly in his Arms, and strenuously embracing her, cry'd out in a sort of Extacy, O Madam! how divinely good you are to declare your Willingness to forgive Actions which cannot, by him who gazes on your Charms, but with Torments inexpressible be restrain'd! And perceiving she affected a little Astonishment at his Proceeding; Nay, Madam, continu'd he, by your own Words you stand condemn'd, I own my self a Lover, an Adorer of your Perfections!--- I am no longer Master of my Passion!--- I must indulge the burning Wishes of my Soul!--- And you must pardon 'em!--- You have said you will;--- and sure, you are too heavenly to retract your Promise.--- A thousand melting Kisses, on her Lips, on her Eyes, her Breasts, made a delightful Parenthesis between almost every Word he spoke, and took from her the Power of answering, if she had attempted it; but she, who was truly charm'd with him, and had long languish'd for the Blessing she now so unexpectedly possess'd, was for some Moments too much transported to have Recourse to Artifice: Scarce knowing what she did, she mix'd her Breath with his; and as he held her, press'd him closer still! But Presence of Mind (which till this Juncture never had been absent from her Breast) resuming its former Place, and reminding her, how cheap, in his Esteem, a too easy Yielding would make her appear, oblig'd her to make some faint Efforts to get loose from his Embrace. --- O unhappy and unguarded Woman that I am, (said she, seeming to weep,) by my own Inadvertency I am lost!--- This dangerous Charmer has search'd into my Soul, and found the fatal Secret out, which till this Moment I durst not tell my self.--- Oh! I am undone for ever (pursu'd she after a Pause, and mustering all her Force to dart one piercing Glance)

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Glance) unless *Beauclair*, the wondrous, --- the lovely, dear destroying *Beauclair*, will be kind enough to hate me, --- to take himself for ever from me, --- and let me see that all-undoing Form no more. First perish this Form, (interrupted he, by this Time fir'd, if not with *Love*, with something which too often bears the Name of it,) blind these Eyes! and new, and unimagi'd Curses light on each Limb and Faculty of *Beauclair*, when he consents even in a Thought to quit the divine *Tortillée*! Ah! then, cry'd she, there is no Power in Heaven or Earth can save me! --- Fame, Duty, Virtue, are too weak Defence--- against those conquering Eyes, that Shape, that Air, that Mein, that Wit, that Voice, those thousand, thousand Worlds of Charms! Death only is a Refuge for *Tortillée*! As she spoke these Words she sunk by degrees, and at last fell quite back, in a counterfeited Swoon, in the Chair she was sitting in: *Beauclair* started immediately from his, and run to the Door, but not to call any Assistance, or bring Water to revive her, (as perhaps some over-aw'd Lovers might have been stupid enough to have done,) but to make it fast, and prevent any other Person from sharing with him in the Glory of restoring her to Life; nor was he, at his Return, at a Loss for Means to bring her back to Sense: But if he cou'd have had Power to inform that Sense with a just Notion of the Happiness she was Mistress of, she had indeed been blest; his extravagant Extent of charming, if not a sufficient *Sanction* for the Crime, was yet a prodigious *Excuse*, and his unquestion'd Honour a Security for the Concealment of it: But, alas! not all the Glories of his Form or Soul, not all the countless Wonders of his Wit and Beauty could work that Miracle, and triumph over the Inconstancy of this universal Dispenser of her Favours: She who, engag'd with a Multiplicity of Lovers, cou'd find no Satisfaction while wanting *Beauclair*; languish'd for others, when possess'd of him; and this accomplish'd Gentleman, in a little Time, serv'd but to swell the Number of her Admirers,

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Admirers, scarce distinguish'd, in her Esteem, from those among 'em of the least Pretence to Merit.

But to go on gradually with her History: She now accounted herself superlatively blest, and perhaps was, for a Time, of the Opinion she never shou'd wish a Joy more elevated than what she had possess'd in *Beauclair*; while he, deluded by his own good Nature, the Insinuations of *Du Lache*, and the Subtilty of this fair Imposture, rioted in Imagination, and grew almost vain on the Influence of his own Charms, which, without an Attempt, or even a Wish that way, had vanquish'd a Heart he believ'd impregnable to the united Force of the whole World besides. *Montamour* was now no more remember'd; her Beauty, and her reported Falshood were lost amidst the Hurry of his present Transports: But the fallacious Pleasure was hardly more than momentary; an Idea which once has made a true Impression, and which Length of Time has rivetted in the Soul, is not with so much Ease eraz'd, tho' exil'd for a while, by Cares, by Business, or another Object, a thousand tender Passages, in spite of us, occur, and bring the Charmer back; and he that once has lov'd *sincerely* is in great Danger of *always* loving. This was at least the Case of *Beauclair*: He was no sooner at home, and had Leisure for Reflection, than *Montamour*, adorn'd with all her Graces, came fresh into his Mind; and when he endeavour'd to extirpate her by thinking on *Tortillée*, he but gave himself Disorders which he found it impossible to quell: --- If he compar'd, either the Beauties of their Minds, or Persons, how infinitely superior to the *latter* (setting aside the Belief of her Inconstancy) did the *former* appear! The Raptures he so lately enjoy'd, already pall'd, and made Desire grow sick: The more he consider'd how much he was belov'd by *Tortillée*, the more he was distracted at the Thoughts that he had been unable to inspire the same Degree of Tendernefs in *Montamour*: Glad wou'd he have been to have had it in his Power to return with something more than Gratitude that

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Vehemence of sincere Affection, which the *one* seem'd so profusely to lavish on him, and to have paid the imaginary Contempt and Ingratitude of the *other* with Hatred and Disdain. But both these Wishes were impossible; and he found, in spite of all the Strength of Reason he was Master of, that Love is not a Passion liable to controul. To add to his Disquiets, and put Reflection more upon the Rack, just as he was going to Bed, a Page from *Montamour* brought him a Letter from her; which hastily opening, he found in it these Lines:

To Monsieur *Beauclair*.

THAT I answer'd yours no sooner, was only owing to the Uncertainty I was in if I should answer it at all. The Levity of a Mind which could dictate Lines like those you writ, is, indeed, worthy of nothing but Contempt; but I am of a Temper constant to a Fault, and confess my self unable, immediately, to despise, what I have once, tho' causelessly, esteem'd.

You need not, however, be under the least Apprehension, that after this you shall receive any Persecutions either from my Love, or Resentment; and am so far from endeavouring to be justify'd in your Opinion, that I do not so much as ask of what I am accus'd; and, conscious of no other real Guilt, on your Account, than in putting a too-great Confidence in your seeming Sincerity and Honour, shall make use of so much Discretion as not to regard whatever imaginary Crime your Baseness may alledge against me, to vindicate your Change of Behaviour.

I think my self too much indebted to Heaven, for putting so early a Stop to any future Engagements with you, to look back with Regret on the past; much less to languish for a Renewal of those fictitious Protestations with which you once had the Power of deceiving

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P. S. To let you see with how much Tranquility of Mind I bear the eternal Loss of you, I have perswaded my Brother, that our breaking off is owing only to my self; you therefore have nothing to fear either from his or my Resentments. If you never endure more from a too-late Repentance, and the Reproaches of your own Conscience, you will be happy --

Adieu --- for Ever.

With what sort of Emotions the Soul of Beauclair was agitated at the reading this Letter, wou'd be as impossible to describe, as it was for him to fix on any one Sentiment to give him Ease. The cold Disdain with which it seem'd to be writ, fir'd him, at first, with Indignation: He thought she gloried in her Falshood, and rejoic'd in an Opportunity to break with him; but when he consider'd it more carefully, he fancy'd he found a certain Stiffness in the Stile, which perswaded him her Indifference was but feign'd. -- One Moment she appear'd to his Imagination, as she really was, all heavenly Truth and Innocence, languishing, dying with the cruel Alteration of her Fortune, and only counterfeiting to despise a Heart which had so ungenerously abandon'd her: -- The next, he thought he saw her, as her Enemies had represented her, false, perjur'd, and inconstant; in private, dissolutely lavish of her Favours, and only hypocritically modest and reserv'd in publick: -- Sometimes, in spite of all Appearances, he was inclin'd to think her virtuous, but then the manner in which he was impos'd on to believe her otherwise, check'd the Suggestions of his Tendernefs. --- Long did the Fondness of his Passion struggle against all Opposition; till at last, resolving to give the Victory to that which seem'd to be the Result of Reason, -- I will no more debate, (said he to himself,) nor join to be my own Deceiver: -- Heaven is not more true than Montamour is false. -- 'Tis plain; and to have made a

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Doubt of it, after the Proofs I have had, is most ridiculous and vain. — No Envy, no Malice, no Design, cou'd have the least Share in the Discovery of her Perfidy: — The very Fellow who betrayed her to me, knew not that he did so: — I 'scap'd the dishonourable Title of her Husband by a very *Miracle*, and to deliberate has made me half unworthy the Deliverance. O (continu'd he, ready to burst with stifled Love, and madding Jealousy) how wou'd the fair Apostate, and her curs'd Minion, the detest-ed *Galliard*, triumph in his Pains, and deride my weak and shameful Irresolution, should any Chance but give them leave to guess it.

In this Confusion of Thought he pass'd the Night, nor did the Morning bring him any Return of Peace, and *Du Lache* coming pretty early to visit him, (as indeed he was seldom from him but in those Hours commonly allow'd for Repose,) was a little startled to find, that all he had done had been unable to fix him in that Disposition of Mind which the *Baroness* requir'd; and being from her perfectly acquainted with the Condescensions she had made him the Day before, had hop'd, till now, that in the possessing her all his Wishes for *Montamour* were utterly extinguish'd; but finding himself deceiv'd, bethought him of another Stratagem, which he had reserv'd as a saving Card, in case there shou'd be an Occasion to make use of it, to strengthen the Accusations he had already laid on that unhappy Lady by the Means of *Le Songe*. As soon as *Beauclair* had given him an Opportunity, by communicating his Inquietudes to him, he exerted all his Policy in aspersing her, yet in such a Manner, as if he did it with Reluctance, and only forc'd to it by the Friendship he had for him. Alas! said he, her Intrigue with *Galliard* is not a Thing of Yesterday: I long have been acquainted with the Secret, and so have many more, tho' every one, knowing the Violence of your Passion, forbore to speak of it to you: Tho' never Man (continu'd he) had a more great and sin-
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cere Esteem for another, than my admiring Soul has ever paid you, yet, to have been Master of an Empire, would not I have been the first to have divulg'd this to you, because I see, (with an Infinity of Concern I speak it,) I see in spite of all, you still must love; and to know her Crime but racks your Peace, and Reason never can restore you to that Quiet which happy Ignorance bestow'd. At these Words *Beauclair* flew into the utmost Rage, swore she was hateful to him; -- that he thought not on her but with Contempt; and, to engage the other to a Belief of what he said, protested his whole Soul was now devoted to another. I wish, indeed, (resum'd this vile Incendiary,) that there was a Possibility for you to do so, for I am most sure you cannot any where bestow the Treasure of your Affection more undeservedly: --- To convince you of the Truth of what I say, if you please, I will wait on you to a Gentleman, a near Relation of mine, who, by his Intimacy some time ago with *Galliard*, was privy to the whole Affair. At my Request, I know, he will inform you of all the Circumstances, which he well knows; and there are some Particulars concerning the Treachery of this *Montamour* to Mademoiselle *Galliard*, to whom she once was dear, which I believe you will confess to be such, as vastly extenuate the Foulness of the Fact. Tho' *Beauclair* thought himself but already too well assur'd, yet the Resolution he had made to hate her, and the Difficulty he found it would be to keep it, made him willing to listen to every Tongue that should repeat her Name in such a Manner as might hush the Pleas of Love, and drown all soft *Remoras* in the Voice of Scandal. An Appointment was presently made, and in the Aternoon *Beauclair*, *Du Lache*, and *Toncarr*, who pass'd for his Kinsman, met at a neighbouring Tavern. It was impossible for *Beauclair* to have any Notion of *Toncarr*, having never seen him but once, and then only in the Struggle with *Le Songe*, when he immediately fled, as was his Part;

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Besides, he appear'd now dress'd *en Cavalier*, and had a Mein and Air agreeable enough to make him be taken for a Man of Fashion. After some few Compliments, *Du Lache* entreated him by their Nearness of Blood, and that much nearer Tie of Friendship which was between them, to relate what he had been privy to of the History of *Galliard*, as to his Concern with *Montamour*. He seem'd at first a little scrupulous; but afterwards, artfully pretending to be angry with himself for denying him so long: Why, said he, shou'd I make any Objections against obliging a Man of Honour and my Friend, when what I have to say can turn only to the Prejudice of a Villain and my Enemy? I have renounc'd all Friendship with *Galliard*; and when I gave him his Life, at his Request, and promis'd Secrecy of all had past, the Conditions on which I made the Promise being broke, to proclaim it now to the whole World can be no Breach of Trust: Know then, Gentlemen, (continued he,) I owe my Birth to *Naples*; but my Parents dying young, I was sent over under the Care of some of my Mother's Relations to *Orleans*, where I had an Uncle. As soon as I arriv'd at the Age of distinguishing Perfections, I became an Admirer of a Lady allow'd to be Mistress of all that Woman can be bleis'd with; but Fortune not then enough my Friend to embolden me to make any Declarations of my Passion with Hopes of Success, prompted me to seek Preferment in the Army. *Hungary* was then the Seat of War: And four Campaigns sent me home in a Condition which I thought wou'd not appear despicable in her Eyes, by whom alone I wish'd to be well thought of. --- But at my Return, I found she was remov'd with her Mother. It was some Time before I heard she went to *Paris*: I soon follow'd, but tho' I made all possible Enquiry, was not able to inform myself any Thing of her. I went to all publick Places, hoping to see her, knowing she was of a Disposition naturally inclin'd to Gaiety; but all my Search was vain. In this Time

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I became acquainted with *Galliard*: He seem'd extremely pleas'd with my Company, took all Opportunities to oblige me, made me the Confident of his Amours, and, among the rest, of his Affair with *Madamoiselle Montamour*. Her Brother, as he told me, had forbid him his House, and he found some Difficulty in conveying Letters to her; he form'd a Pretence for me to introduce myself to the Family, which, as it would take up too much Time, and be of no Consequence to the Story, I shall forbear to repeat. In fine, to repay some Obligations I had receiv'd from him, I took upon me to be his Emisary, and they had frequent Opportunities of meeting through my Means. I could not avoid condemning him, indeed, in my private Opinion, because I knew he had a Wife, who, I heard by others, was a most beautiful and deserving Woman, though he spoke of her as the *Reverse*. However, as she was an utter Stranger to me, I thought it would be Imprudence to interfere with any Advice, which, 'twas probable, would only occasion a Breach of Friendship between us, and be of no Service to the Lady. Thus it pass'd on, till one Day he invited me to his House, where I had never been before: But, Good God! how shall I express the Astonishment, when in *Madamoiselle Galliard* I found the Charmer I so long had sought. The Confusion with which I beheld her as his Wife, and as a Wife so injur'd by him, must have been visible to him, had he been present; but he was that Moment as she came into the Room retir'd to his Closet to write a Letter, which I was to convey to *Montamour*. She blush'd at Sight of me, and burst into a Flood of Tears at rememb'ring the Tranquillity of her Condition when last she saw me, and perhaps mix'd with a Sensibility of the Tenderness my Eyes, tho' not my Tongue had often taken the Liberty of telling her I felt on her Account. There was then no Opportunity of private Conversation; he soon return'd to us. But after that I had frequent Opportunities of discoursing
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her, and she made no Scruple of complaining to me of his Unkindness.--- I was almost mad at the Inhumanity of my Fate; and tho' I thought myself most wretched in being depriv'd of her, yet I solemnly protest I was not so much troubled that she was *married*, as that she was so *unhappily* married. I could no longer be passive to the Affair: I told *Galliard*, that now I had seen his Wife, and found her a Woman so infinitely deserving, I could not approve of his Proceedings. At first he laugh'd at my Admonitions, but finding I persisted, seem'd to take it ill, and assur'd me, he should always follow the Dictates of his Inclinations, without any Regard to what those who had no Business with it, should think of his Behaviour. Pretty well warm'd before, this Answer set me all on Fire, and I return'd it in a manner he knew not how to brook: --- In short, we fought, I had the good Fortune to disarm him, and was about to revenge his Lady's Wrongs, when he entreated me to spare his Life, and swore ten thousand Oaths never to injure her again in the Manner he had done.--- On this I threw him back his Sword, and went immediately to *Montamour*, told her what I done, and the Promise I had exacted from her Lover.--- She appeared enrag'd at my Presumption, as she call'd it; but as Women are generally pretty artful in penetrating into those kinds of Secrets, she presently guessing my sudden Dislike of their Intimacy proceeded from my Friendship to his Wife, soon grew calm; and changing her Voice, Well *Monsieur*, said she, I see the Charms you have found in *Mademoiselle Galliard* have made you an Enemy to her *Husband*; but suppose I value your Friendship at so high a Rate, that to oblige you to my Interest, I contrive some way to put you in Possession of the *Wife*, will you refuse me then your Assistance in the Continuance of my Happiness with the *Husband*. So strange a Proposition coming from a Woman, who, bating her criminal Affection for *Galliard*, I always look'd on as Mistress of a good deal of Ho-

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nour, took from me the Power of making an immediate Answer ; and she interpreting my Silence as a Token of Consent, I will not, resum'd she, promise that Madamoiselle will yield to your Desires ; she is too foolishly fond of her Husband, tho' he despises her, and too great a Bigot to her Matrimonial Vow ; but this I will engage, to bring her to a Place, where, if you think fit to make use of the Advantage, Denials shall be in vain. I vow to you, Gentlemen, (pursu'd he,) that the Shock with which I heard her speak thus, was greater than I am able to represent : The violent Passion I had bore to Madamoiselle *Galliard*, while I believ'd her in a Condition capable of returning it, was now converted to a sincere and noble Friendship ; my Affection was too pure to wish to obtain more of her than Honour would permit, tho' with her free Consent ; how then cou'd brutal *Force* have any Place in my Intentions ? I soon convinc'd this mistaken Lady, that the Person she was speaking to, was of a Temper vastly different from what he imagin'd ; and endeavour'd, by all the Arguments I could invent, to perswade her to consider the Injustice she was guilty of to *herself*, as well as to her *Rival*. But all was of no Effect ; she seem'd harden'd in her Crime, and pretended to vindicate what she did with so much Haughtiness, and so little Shame, that I question if the most common *Fille de Joye* in *Paris* cou'd with such Assurance have behav'd : She call'd me Sot, Fool, and every opprobrious Name her Spite and Anger cou'd put into her Mouth : Told me she regarded not what my *Thoughts* were of her Actions ; but if I dar'd to report 'em, she had a Brother who wou'd not suffer the Abuse to go unpunish'd. *Talking* never was my Talent ; and being altogether unaccustom'd to such Kind of Encounters, she had very much the Advantage of me, and I was at last glad to leave her unconverted. I heard afterwards, that all I had done prov'd ineffectual to break the Correspondence between her and *Galliard* ; and I had not fail'd to call
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that dishonourable Wretch a second Time to account, if his Wife had not writ to me, conjuring me to take no farther Notice of the Affair, for it but encreas'd his ill Usage of her in *private*, and gave occasion for *publick* Ridicule.

Toncarr here finish'd his monstrous Lye; and *Du Lache*, tho' he had order'd him to form some Story which might seem plausible, to scandalize *Montamour* on the Account of *Galliard*, was himsef astonish'd at the Power of an Invention, which, out of nothing cou'd create such a well-connected Pile of Falshood: For in reality he knew no more of *Montamour* or her Brother, *Galliard* or his Wife, than their Names and Places of Abode. How then cou'd *Beauclair*, already prepossess'd, (by Proofs, which he thought were undeniable,) suspect the Truth of what he heard? He ask'd several Questions, not to entrap him, but to satisfy his own Curiosity; as, how they look'd when together; what they said; and in what manaeer they behav'd. To all which *Toncarr* replied with such an Aptitude and Readiness, as whoever had listen'd to their Discourse, would have sworn he utter'd nothing but Sincerity.

Tho' such a Story as this, of *Montamour*, some few Weeks past, wou'd have kindled such a Fire of Indignation in the Soul of *Beauclair*, as nothing but the Blood of him that told it cou'd have quench'd, yet now he heard it with no other Disorder than what sprung from the Shame of having been so much deceiv'd in his Opinion. If he had had Leisure for Reflection, 'tis probable that in spite of all Opposers, *Love* wou'd still have exerted itself in favour of that Lady; but the Company he was in took Care to keep off an Enemy so dangerous to their Designs: *Toncarr* was of a gay facetious Disposition, had a good deal of Wit, and knew how to make himself perfectly entertaining in Conversation: The Subtilty of his Companion furnish'd him with Themes, such as he knew wou'd be agreeable to *Beauclair*; and between them both it was no difficult Matter to work

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on that good Nature and Softness of Disposition, the Excess of which was the only Foible of this deluded Gentleman. The Glass went briskly round, and the Sprightliness of the Wine gave Life to the Conversation; not a celebrated Beauty in *Paris*, but was toasted; and it coming to *Du Lache's* Turn to begin, Come Gentlemen, said he, here is all Health, and an eternal Round of Happiness to Her whose exterior Charms (tho' by far surpassing all her Sex besides) are but as Foils, when brought in Comparison with the more shining Graces of her *Mind*; and when I thus describe her, none who boast of a distinguishing Capacity, will need be told I mean the Divine Baroness *de Tortillée*. Immediately, *Toncarr*, before instructed, took the Hint, and fell into such Encomiums on her, as in Reality no Woman ever did, or cou'd deserve. *Beauclair*, tho' he was far from being of their Opinion, thought himself oblig'd in Gratitude, for the Favours he had so lately receiv'd, to join with them in the Praises they gave her; and as most People are apt to admire what they find the rest of the World do, and having never had the Opportunity of hearing the least Tittle to her Disadvantage, began to think on her as a Woman who had more Perfections than he had hitherto found out: He imagin'd it was owing to the Remains of his former Passion, that he had so long been blind, resolv'd to open his whole Soul to receive her Idea, and accus'd himself of Stupidity that he was able to love her no better.

They broke not up till it was late; and *Du Lache* fearing, with good Reason, that if *Beauclair* was left too suddenly to himself, some Accident might happen to render all they had done of no Effect, and discover that neither *Montamour* nor *Tortillée* were the Persons they had been represented, was resolv'd to trust nothing to Chance, but he went home with him, and carry'd him the next Morning to drink Tea with the Baroness, in the Afternoon met by Appointment at Mademoiselle *d'Ouvrier's*, engag'd him to pass the next Day with *Toncarr*, the ensuing

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one with the Baroness again.— In fine, for a considerable Time he had scarce a Moment which was not taken up by one or other of this Confederacy; and they took Care by ten thousand various Artifices to keep his Thoughts in a perpetual Whirl, till they imagin'd all Remembrance of *Montamour* was utterly extingnish'd.

In the mean Time, never was a Heart more greatly distress'd than that of this unhappy Lady; to all the Softness of her own Sex, she had that Constancy of Mind, and Steadiness of Resolution, which those of the other *boast*, but rarely *prove* themselves Masters of. Difficult it was to make her entertain a Passion, but much more difficult to extinguish it. *Beauclair* was the only Man who ever had the Power to inspire her with one tender Wish; but now not *Beauclair's* self cou'd change her Sentiments: The Impression which his *Charms* had made, not all his *Ingratitude* cou'd erase: She lov'd, she worshipp'd, she ador'd him still; within her gentle Soul no Storms of Anger rag'd, no wild Revenge, no Jealousy had place; and when she reflected how cruelly she was abandon'd, how causelessly affronted, she consider'd it only as a Flaw in his Disposition, a Frailty influenc'd by *Fate*, unavoidable, and therefore pardonable. Never Woman bore the *Disappointment* of her Hopes with so little Resentment, nor so strongly defended herself from making any Endeavours to *recover 'em*. In spite of the most ardent Love, the softest Languishment, the tenderest secret Meltings of her Soul, cou'd urge, she chose to die away in fruitless Wishes, rather than let the *dear Unkind* be sensible of what she felt. She was so far from desiring to take any Advantage of his ten thousand Times repeated Vows, or the solemn Contract that was between them, that her greatest Fear was, lest her Brother, (if he knew the Truth of his Behaviour,) shou'd take some Measures to oblige him to the Performance of it; and for that reason blinded him as much as possible: She told him, that she had discover'd some little Foibles

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in the Humour of *Beauclair*, which she was afraid might not be very agreeable in a married State; --- that she was determin'd to continue as she was for some Time; and that she had pretended to be piqu'd at something he had done, on purpose to create a Quarrel to retard the Match. The Turn she gave to this Affair succeeded well enough, to engage the Belief of a Person, who, by reason of his great Employments, (being Judge of the criminal Causes, one of the Council, and taken up with many other Concerns of the State,) had not too much leisure to consider the Occurrences of his Family; but to the rest of her Acquaintance it was obvious that in *this*, tho' in this alone, she was not free from Dissimulation: Her *Eyes*, whenever she attempted to speak of *Beauclair* with Indifference, declar'd her *Heart* was far from consenting to what she said: His very Name but mention'd spread soft Confusion over all her Face; with stifled Sighs her lovely Bosom heav'd, and gentle Tumults trembled in each Limb. She was sensible of it herself; and therefore, tho' her Thoughts were full of nothing else, forbore as much as possible all Discourse of him. But the Violence she did her Inclination was such, as Words wou'd but vainly endeavour to represent: To avoid it, she shunn'd all Conversation as much as she cou'd without being taken Notice of, and pass'd her Hours in Solitude and Silence. Contemplation afforded her widely different Entertainments, unutterable Pleasure, unutterable Pain! When retir'd, shut up within her Closet, no impertinent Interruption near, and *Beauclair's* lov'd Idea only present, his Letters fill'd with ten thousand thousand tender Vows and soft Professions, lying before her, how did she indulge Imagination, how dwell on each enchanting Syllable! And when read o'er and o'er, Fancy grew warmer still, how did she call the past blest Moments of his Presence back! how re-enjoy each Word, each Look, each Touch, and sink in Rapture at the dear Remembrance! --- But then, O dreadful Change! Imagination tir'd, the visionary Joy

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Joy dissolv'd, and Sense, *distracting* Sense, return'd, what Racks of Thought, what unmatch'd Horrors sad Despair presented! To be supremely *curst*, one must be supremely *blest*; never to have been *happy*, is not to be *unhappy*; such only linger out a Life in dull Stupidity, untasting *Pleasure*, and unknowing *Pain*; equally ignorant of *refin'd* Delight, or *exquisite* Disquiet; --- but, to have *lost*, --- to have lost, for ever, all the Soul holds dear! --- to have the Joys, once ours, torn from our bleeding Breasts by the black Hand of seperating Fate, no more to be restor'd! --- the chearful Land of Hope obscur'd in Shades, and all before our Eyes a barren Prospect, and a Wild of Woe! that, that, indeed, is finish'd Wretchedness, consummate Misery!

But if to the being forsaken and affronted by the Man in whose Society she plac'd her whole Felicity, there needed any Thing to make her the most unhappy Woman breathing, malicious Fortune found the Way to give it. Mademoiselle *Bellfleur*, Embroiderer, one of those Creatures whose Houses had been at the *Baroness's* Devotion, whenever she had occasion for a private *Rendezvous*, had by some Accident discover'd that Mademoiselle *D'ouvrier's* was now the Place that Lady had made choice of for the carrying on her Amour with *Beauclair*; and being excessively piqu'd at it, set herself on being reveng'd some Way or other. She was sensible that nothing was more known than the Loves of *Beauclair* and *Montamour*, and that the whole Town was surpris'd at the Delay of a Marriage which so long had been expected; and imagining she had found out the Cause, resolv'd it should no longer be a Secret. She had formerly been employ'd by *Montamour* in the working her some fine Gowns and Petticoats, and making that a Pretence for waiting on her, introduc'd a Story which the Hearer of it had little Reason to thank her for repeating; for tho' it was much more difficult to gain any Credit from this generous Lady to the Prejudice of her ungrateful Lover, than her Enemies

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mies had found from him even for the greatest Falshoods, yet the bare Probability that such a Thing might be true, was a Shock which cannot well be represented. In Justice to herself, she could not avoid being of Opinion, that to be abandon'd for a Woman of the *Baronefs's* Character and Humour, was an Indignity such as ought to make the Man that offer'd it odious to her Memory: But all that Pride or Reason could suggest, was too, too weak to bring her to either Scorn or Hate; nor, though the causeless Change of his Behaviour, the Suddenness of it, and the cold, neglectful, and indeed, affrontive Style of his last Letter, made it seem likely enough that nothing but a new Passion could occasion it, yet Jealousy was so great a Stranger to her Nature, that she could not, but with great Difficulty, entertain it: However, the little Touches she now began to feel of that eternal Enemy to Tranquility, gave her Perturbations far beyond all she ever knew before.

It was not in this Manner the *Baronefs* pass'd her Time, believing herself secure of the Heart she so ardently had wish'd to gain, revell'd in full Delight, and wanton'd in the Assurance of her Happiness; proud, vain, and self-sufficient, she now desy'd all Fears of ever losing what she had acquir'd, despis'd her Rival's Charms, and not only spoke of her, but also really consider'd her as a Creature incapable of giving her any Pain on *Beauclair's* Account, nay, tho' he should discover by what Arts he had been betray'd to treat her in the Manner he had lately done. She hated her, however, for the Engagements she had with him, and being naturally of a most malicious Disposition to all aimable Persons of her own Sex, took an inexpressible Pleasure in having it in her Power to mortify 'em. This base Woman thought it not Misery enough to have alienated the Affections of her Lover, but must study to inflict yet more: She could not think herself truly bless'd in the Possession of *Beauclair*, without triumphing in the Conquest she had made; it was not sufficient for

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her Pride, that *Montamour* was abandon'd; there wanted, to compleat her Happiness, the making that afflicted Lady sensible for *whom* she had been abandon'd. She was now grown above the Care of her Reputation, and thought it beneath her to regard any Thing but the pleasing herself; and, entirely ignorant that Mademoiselle *Bellfleur* had, in part, perform'd the Work she aim'd at, communicated her Desires to *Du Lache*: He who was always ready to serve her on all Occasions, was far from being backward in complying with her in this; and he approv'd of it the more, because that he imagin'd, that when *Montamour* should know her Rival, it would encrease her Resentment to *Beauclair*, and render it impossible for them ever to be reconcil'd, and consequently prevent any Discovery of those villainous Impositions which had been made use of to disunite them. Mademoiselle *Sansfoy* came immediatly into his Head, as the most proper Engine upon Earth to manage this Affair, who would infallibly do all, yet be ignorant herself of the Cause of what she did: And as soon as he had consulted with the *Baroness* after what Manner he should set this eternal Clack a-going, went to visit her with a Packet of Tidings, which he knew would render him a welcome Guest to a Lady of her inquisitive Temper. He gave her a full Account of all the several Meetings of *Beauclair* and the *Baroness*, the Manner of their Conversation; and, because it happen'd to suit best with his Purpose, spoke Truth in every thing, but when he said the *Passion* was wholly on *his* Side, the Desire of coming acquainted *his*, and that all the Assiduity he had paid cou'd engage no other Return than Gratitude from the cold inexorable *Tortillée*. But the main Business of his Errand was to tell her, That the *Baron* being out of Town, the *Baroness* had consented to pass the Evening with himself and *Beauclair*, and that they were to meet in the *Tuilleries* at Ten a-Clock. He told her this, to the end, that if *Montamour* shou'd question the Truth of what she shou'd hear from *Sansfoy*, her

Curiosity

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Curiosity might, perhaps, lead her to satisfy herself by watching at that Place, where he and the *Baroness* had contriv'd to make Things appear in such a View, as should distract her very Soul. As he had no other Design in visiting her, than to make her the Instrument in tormenting *Montamour*, so soon as he had said all that he thought wou'd be conducive to his Purpose, he took his Leave: Nor did she press him to stay, being as impatient to reveal what she had promis'd to keep secret, as he was for her to do so, tho' he had artfully engag'd her to the contrary, well knowing that nothing is a greater Incitement to stir up a busy Temper, than to adjure it to be passive. Tho' *Montamour* liv'd but a Street or two off; she thought the Distance was too great; and, as she went the few Steps there was between 'em, had a thousand Dreads that the Person she was going to, might be abroad, or engag'd with Company, or some Accident should happen which wou'd retard the Recital she had to make: But she labour'd not long under these Apprehensions; she found her at home, and alone; and being receiv'd with the usual Familiarity which that Lady always treated her Intimates with, soon disburden'd herself of that Load of Secrets she had been so big with: She forgot not the minutest Circumstance she had been told by *Du Lache*, to which her natural Propensity to Scandal made her add a thousand more. *Montamour*, with an aching Heart, listen'd attentively to all she said, and long'd to hear something improbable enough to make her hope that all the rest was false; but most of the Particulars that *Sansfoy* mention'd, and especially the Place of their Assignment, agreed so exactly with what she had been inform'd by *Mademoiselle Bellfleur*, that she no longer had the Power of doubting. She bore it, however, with a Presence of Mind, which very few, if any Woman, beside herself, could boast of on the like Occasion. She vented no Extravagancies, --- she curs'd not, --- she revil'd not; --- and when *Sansfoy*, surpris'd, and vex'd to find her of a

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Humour so different from her Sex, began to testify her Friendship by some Expressions which sounded like Condolement, Pity not me, (interrupted she, turning her Mouth to a half disdainful Smile, while her Eyes trembled to restrain their Tears,) pity not *me*; rather commiserate the unhappy *Beauclair*, whose easy Nature, and whose frank Belief, makes him the Property of such Wretches as *Du Lache* and his Companions. The Reputation of having an Intrigue with a Woman of the Baroness's Quality, will never ballance the disgraceful Means by which he has attain'd it; Nor perhaps, (continu'd she with a deep Sigh) will he be always of Opinion, that to have possess'd her is a sufficient Recompence for the eternal Loss of *Montamour*. It was impossible for *Sansfoy*, who in such a Circumstance wou'd have behav'd in a Manner vastly different, to forbear expressing her Sentiments in such Terms as Women commonly make use of:---Good God! said she, is this all?---Can you sit down so tamely with your Wrongs!---I know you love the Villain,---and can you bear to lose him!---Shall a Woman, so infamous as *Tortillée*, deprive you of him?---Will you not be reveng'd?---Will you not expose them both?---The *one* to the Ridicule of the whole World; the *other* to her Husband's just Resentment?---I am not so ignorant of her Character, as to imagine (whatever her Pander *Du Lache* wou'd perswade me) that her Conversation with *Beauclair* is no more than a *Platonick* one;---and if you please, (continu'd she, after a Pause, and finding the other was silent,) I will join with you to ruin her: I am acquainted with the whole History of her several Amours,---can prove that *d'Esperanse*, tho' he maintain'd her, was not the only favour'd Lover;---and that since her Marriage with this foolish Baron, she has been had by half the Town,---nay, at this very Time, *St. Aumar* and the young amorous Marquis *de Sonville* enjoy an equal Share with the perfidious *Beauclair*.---I know where and when both of 'em have had Assignations with

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with her.---- Count *De la Torre* has also experienc'd how liberal she is of her Favours : When he went out of Town the other day, his Sister found, among some Papers he had left behind him, Letters which by the Hand we knew to be *Tortillée's*, and the Contents were such, as are scarce fit for modest Ears :--- I'll bring you acquainted with her ; she'll furnish you with Stories, such as will enable you to revenge yourself on this unworthy Rival. She wou'd doubtless have run on a great deal more, if *Montamour* (whose Soul was incapable of harbouring any mean Notions, and glow'd in her Bosom with a generous Disdain at this Proposition) had not put a Stop to the Career of her Revilings. She blush'd to think how justly her Sex was reflected on by the other ; and looking on *Sansfoy* with an Air of Scorn, which she was very rarely seen to wear, No, Madam ! no, said she, I never will enter into any such Measures, nor can be pleas'd that others shou'd so far interest themselves in my Quarrel, as to make 'em forget that Decorum and Mildness of Behaviour, which ought to be the distinguishing Character of Womanhood :---- The greatest Proof you can give me of your Friendship, is to let this Story die. --I need not fear my Injuries will go for ever unreveng'd : The Crime itself will bring on Stings far worse than I cou'd wish, much more have Power to inflict. It *Beauclair*, after so many Vows of an unalterable Affection, can be so basely perfidious to quit me for the Baronefs, he will also quit her for another ;--- her Empire will be of short Continuance. And to be forsaken, to a Woman of her vain Humour, will be a Punishment the most adequate of any to her Guilt ; or if she be really so vicious as the World believes, her Artifice will not always serve her to conceal it from the discerning *Beauclair* : Remorse will then be sufficiently my Avenger. But if neither of these shou'd happen, shou'd *he* be ever blind, *she* ever cunning, I am resolv'd, in Justice to myself, to continue entirely passive ; for sure a Woman, such as she, is as much below

my *Hate*, as he by loving her, has render'd himself of my *Esteem*; both equally unworthy of my Thoughts, and only fit for one another. And is it possible (interrupted *Sansfoy*, more and more confounded) that you really are Mistress of so much Philosophy as you pretend? ---- Will Love, and Pride, and Grief, in such a stabbing Circumstance, be always over-power'd by Prudence? Could you endure to *behold* what yet you have but *heard* of? --- Cou'd you bear to *see* the Man who has ador'd you, --- the Man on whom (in spite of your boasted Moderation) I know your Soul still doats, kneel to another, and pay those soft Submissions due only to you? --- Could you, I say, support a Sight like this, and yet contain your Temper? --- No, 'tis impossible! ---- 'tis against Nature! ---- And, if I could persuade you to go with me in some Disguise, and be a Witness of their meeting, I believe I should find your Behaviour at such a View far different from what the hearing it occasions. I do not think you wou'd, reply'd *Montamour* coldly: I have already so many Proofs of his Perfidy and Ingratitude, that to see 'em in the most strict Embrace cou'd not give me more. Yet, resum'd *Sansfoy*, eager to engage her to an Enterprize, in which she promis'd herself so much Diversion, there is something that more nearly touches the Passions in an *Ocular* Demonstration. ---- It may be so, interrupted *Montamour*, (who knew the other's Humour too well, not to guess at the Cause which made her pressing,) and for that Reason I will not endeavour to convince you, by putting my Temper to any hazardous Tryals, for the vain Glory of surmounting a Difficulty which few of my Sex would have Resolution enough to do. But (cried *Sansfoy*, vex'd to the Heart to find her still so calm) I advise you to it by all means: It wou'd rather be an Argument of *Stupidity* than *Prudence* to lose such an Opportunity of upbraiding *him*, and detecting your *Rival*: Should you but mention the Story now, it might be believ'd; ---- both might deny

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deny it, --- and you only be call'd perverse and jealous: --- But if you meet them at this shameful Affignation, and Face to Face confront 'em, you boldly may proclaim him for a Villain, and enjoy that inexpressible Satisfaction of having your Rival in your Power. She said a great deal more to the same Purpose; but all her Reasons had no Effect on *Montamour*: That discreet Lady reflected within herself on the Weakness of Humanity, and how little sufficient *Reason* at some Times, and in some Cases, is to vanquish *Passion*: She knew not how far she might be transported at such a killing Interview; and easily perceiving it was more the Pleasure of having something to talk of, than any Interest she took in her Affairs, which made her Adviser so importunate, resolv'd she shou'd rather want a Theme for the Entertainment of her next Visiting-Day, than furnish her with one, which she was not certain might not be to the Disadvantage of the Reputation of that Moderation, she had hitherto taken so much Care to preserve. It was something wonderful, indeed, that a Woman who lov'd to that prodigious Degree of Tenderness as she did, and had such Appearances how much that Tenderness was abus'd, cou'd so well dissemble the Disorders of her Soul. The whole Time that *Sansfoy* staid with her, she continu'd Mistress of the same steady Resolution she had always profess'd; and that busy Woman had the Mortification, after all the Pains she had taken, to find herself disappointed, and that all she had done was able to draw nothing from her which might be a Subject of Ridicule! But what the unhappy *Montamour* suffer'd while under so cruel a Constraint can hardly be imagin'd! As soon as she was alone, she shut herself into her Chamber, and gave a Loose to the long labouring pent-up Passions of her Soul: --- Her Couch, --- her Bed, were now no longer able to sustain the Force of her wild Grief; --- she grovell'd on the Floor; --- she beat her Breast; --- she wrung her lovely Hands; --- the celebrated Lustre of her shining Eyes was now extinct

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in Tears; and whoever had seen her in this Condition wou'd have believ'd it impossible she cou'd, but some Moments before, have worn such an Appearance of Serenity. As it grew nearer to the Hour, in which her Rival was to enjoy the Presence of her ador'd *Beauclair*, her Agonies encreas'd: O God! cry'd she, now is the happy *Tortillée* preparing to receive a Heaven I have for ever lost! --- Now, now, she summons all her Charms, adorns her Face with Smiles, and practises a thousand Arts, a thousand Graces, to secure her Conquest! --- And what, (O torturing Thought!) what gives Addition to her Beauty, and makes her Eyes sparkle with an unusual Splendor, is the Knowledge that she triumphs over the forsaken *Montamour*! Whenever this Reflection came across her Thoughts, all that she had of Woman in her Soul exerted itself; No, wou'd she say, starting up and wiping away her Tears, with an Air of Derision, --- I am not, will not be unhappy; --- I scorn the Wretch who yields his Heart, where neither Virtue, Wit, nor Beauty claim the Prize, where Novelty is alone the Charm. --- He that can love *Tortillée*, the infamous the often abandon'd *Tortillée*! shall henceforth be the Object of of my *Mirth*, equally unworthy of my *Love* or *Anger*. But how long she continu'd in this Mind, those who have ever felt the Force of true Affection, need not be inform'd: To *them* it may seem superfluous to say, *Tenderness* soon got the better of *Resentment*; but the *Insensibles*, or those who love only because they are *belov'd*, will perhaps condemn her, when they shall know those Resolutions were no sooner *made* than *broke*; and sinking from that Air of Haughtiness she had assum'd, into one wholly compos'd of Softness, And yet, said she, among the Race of Man, where is there one whose Charms can vie with those, this dear, this false Protector boasts? --- How harsh, and how untunable wou'd sound the Name of Love from any *other* Mouth! and with what Harmony it flows from his! --- His Voice, --- his Looks, --- his soft enchanting Mein, adorn the tender
Passion,

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Passion, and make Desire a Virtue. In this Manner was she hurry'd by the various Agitations of her Mind, till the Clock striking Ten, put her in mind, that if she did design to be a Witness of this Meeting, it was time she shou'd prepare herself. In spite of all the Temperance she had maintain'd in the Presence of *Sansfoy*, the Woman's Curiosity now gain'd the Victory: She cou'd not be assur'd, that the Man who had made so many Vows to *her*, was that Moment about to offer 'em to *another*, without a Desire to know in what Manner he wou'd do it; and, perhaps, was not without a secret Hope she shou'd discover a Difference in his Behaviour; and as wretched as she thought herself, found a kind of Pleasure, a fullen Satisfaction in this Thought. Enabled by it, she got on her Cloaths, and muffling herself up in her Hoods, so as it was impossible for her to be known, stole out of the House alone, without letting even her own Woman into the Secret. ---- What is not *Love*, when infligated by *Jealousy*, capable of performing! She, who at another Time, or on any other Occasion, wou'd not have ventur'd where there was the least Appearance of Danger, or to her Person or Reputation, now had either *forgot*, or had Courage to *despise* the most eminent ones; and led by the Emotions of her tumultuous Passions went, when it was dark, unguarded, and unattended to the Place which she was told was destin'd for the Rendezvous of those ungenerous Destroyers of her Peace. She had not been long in the *Tuilleries* before she discern'd a Man and Woman coming down a Walk opposite to that she was in: She imagin'd it might be those she sought, and immediately cross'd, making only a little Stand to let them pass, and follow'd at a convenient Distance, so near as to be able to distinguish what was said, but far enough, as she thought, not to have them believe they were observ'd. The Baroness (for it was she, indeed, who, accompany'd by *Du Lache*, had prevented the Hour appointed by *Beauclair*, that she might have the Opportunity of ex-

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cuting that Design before concerted with her assisting Villain) presently perceiv'd her, but finding she was alone, cou'd not be assur'd whether it was her *Rival* or *Sansfoy* herself, who she knew had Curiosity enough for such an Enterprize, if she cou'd not prevail on the other: But not doubting, but whatever she shou'd discover wou'd be carry'd immediately to *Montamour*, began to talk to *Du Lache* in the Manner they had contriv'd for the insulting her: I think (said she, raising her Voice, that she that follow'd might lose nothing of what was said) I ought no longer to doubt the Sincerity of my charming Friend: He has made no Scruple of revealing to me the dearest Secrets of his Soul: He confess'd that he formerly had a Tenderness for *Montamour*, which, till he saw me, he took for Love: He acknowledges a *Pity* for the Impression which he finds his Vows of Courtship have made on her too-easy yielding Heart; but protests that he has of late desisted from giving her any Proofs of that Affection she once flatter'd herself with; and that since his Acquaintance with me, he never has visited her. I am certain he has not, reply'd *Du Lache*; and in my Opinion you cannot have a greater Testimony of his Passion, than his abandoning a Maid of her Quality and Fortune; --- one, who in the Judgment of most People is Mistress of a thousand Beauties and Accomplishments; and unto whom, in spite of her Reserve, he knows himself extremely dear. Poor Girl, (resum'd the malicious Baroness,) I pity her: Her Condition is truly deplorable; for the engaging *Beauclair* has sworn he ne'er will see her more; and but this very Morn, among a Million of tender Protestations, bound the Promise he before had made me, with so solemn a Vow, that 'tis impossible he should ever dare to speak of her, to write to her, or even think of her again, with any Thing beyond the common Civility of a Stranger. What pass'd in the Soul of *Montamour* at hearing this Discourse, and what she endur'd in the Struggles of her Passions with her Discretion,

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cretion, can never be represented by Words: The Idea which one ought to conceive of her Sufferings wou'd be lessen'd by Description; therefore, I shall only say that she supported them with Life, but that was all; while the Baroness went on with her Persecutions in this Manner: Another Proof of his Affection, resum'd she, and which I think a prodigious one, is the Uneasiness he expresses at my but speaking to any other Man: He fancies the whole Creation are his Rivals, and envies even the Wind the Blessing of saluting me. -- I will tell you a pleasant Thing of him, (contin'd she, laughing:) He came to visit me the other day, and found the Marquis *de Sonville* with me. I knew his Thoughts, and could not forbear smiling, to see how awkwardly he counterfeited a Cheertulness, till the Marquis's Page happening to bring him a Letter, he retir'd to the farther End of the Room to read it, and gave my impatient Lover an Opportunity to vent some Part of his *Chagrin*. A Pen and Ink standing upon the Table, he immediately writ, blotting it out as soon as he had done, --- O *Tortillée! Tortillée! Divine* as you are in all Things else, in the Affairs of *Love* I fear you are but *mortal*, and liable to change! What, O what must then become of the unfortunate *Beauclair*! Her Invention, which was seldom at a Loss, when prompted either by her Interest or ill Nature, would certainly have furnish'd her with many more Stories of this kind, if the coming of *Beauclair* had not put a Stop to 'em. Tho' the Curiosity of seeing in what manner he wou'd behave, had been the only Reason which had brought *Montamour* there, she was now hinder'd from the Gratification of it. As subterranean Fires prey on their Mansion, and consume with certain, tho' unseen Destruction, the various and violent Agitations which rag'd in the Breast of this unhappy Lady, not having Liberty to vent themselves, roll'd stormy for a while, then growing too mighty for Restraint disdain'd all Bounds, and would have burst in Exclamations suited to their Cause, had not her
gentle

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gentle Soul, entirely unaccustom'd to such Struggles, refus'd to obey the Dictates of her Fury; when she was about to shew her self, to speak, and to upbraid, she lost the Power; her Voice forsook her, and her every Sense flew frighted at the Tempest, and left her Body motionless on the Earth: She saw the dear Undoer of her Quiet approach;--- She saw the detested Pair, whose Discourse had plung'd her into such Agonies, walk hastily from the Place they were in to meet him; but what their Conversation was after he join'd 'em, her Swoon depriv'd her of the Means to observe.

They staid not long in the Walk: The *Baroness* little suspecting what had happen'd to *Montamour* drew them immediately out of the *Tuilleries*; for tho' *Beauclair* address'd her with all imaginable Complaisance, and a vast deal of Gallantry, yet he was far from expressing himself with that prodigious Tenderness which she would have her Rival believe.

Poor *Montamour* remain'd for a considerable Time in the Condition they had left her, and for want of Help, join'd to the Coldness of the Earth, might, perhaps, never have recover'd, if an unexpected Accident had not brought Monsieur *Galliard* to her Relief. He had been abroad that Night on an Intrigue, which having met with a Disappointment in, he came thither, thinking to indulge his *Chagrin*. Chance led him to the very Place where she was lying: She had fallen quite cross the Walk; so that dark as it was, it was impossible for him to pass, without perceiving something in his Way. The Oddness of the Adventure at first a little surpris'd him: To find a Person whom, though her Face was hid, by some Jewels which glitter'd on her Breast, he guess'd to be a Woman of Fashion, at such an Hour, in such a Place, and in such a Posture, made him begin to imagine that Fortune had design'd him a Reparation for the Disappointment he had lately met with: But he soon lost that Hope, tho' to the Encrease of his Amazement, when kneeling down by her, and pulling
back

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back her Hoods, he discover'd who she was. The fresh Air immediately restor'd her to Life, but it was a good while before she regain'd her Senses; She knew not where she was, nor who was present; and remembring nothing but the Cause which had thrown her into this Disorder, frequently repeated the Names of *Beauclair*, *Tortillée*, and *Du Lache*, but in so wild and incoherent a Manner, that if *Galliard* had not been pretty well acquainted with the Reasons she had for Jealousy, he could not have been able to guess 'em by her Words. The Respect he always paid her, and which, indeed, her Conduct exacted from every Body, made him behave himself to her in a manner very different to what he wou'd have us'd to any other Woman in the like Circumstance; and as he had a great deal of good Sense, whenever he pleas'd to exert it, he made use of a great many fine Reasonings to dissuade her from giving way to the Suggestions of her Passions. She stood very little in need of his Advice, whenever she had the Liberty of Thought; and now beginning to resume it, was more angry with her self for the Indiscretion her Curiosity had made her guilty of, than with those who had occasion'd it. She knew *Galliard* to be of a Temper not much different from *Sansfoy*, and cou'd not hope that this Adventure would be kept a Secret: She did not fail however to conjure him to it; and 'tis possible his extraordinary Esteem for her might have oblig'd him to put a Constraint on his Inclinations, if an unexpected Accident had not discover'd the whole Transaction without his Help.

During the Time that *Montamour* was in her Swoon, and that she pass'd in Discourse with *Galliard*, which was several Hours, (for tho' she stole out of the House without being taken notice of, she knew not how to get into it, in the same manner, and therefore was not over-hasty to be gone,) *Beauclair* was entertain'd by the Baroness in the most splendid manner that her Love, and the natural Profuseness of her Temper cou'd invent; and knowing
that

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that Wine is no small Provocative to Desire, she had provided a vast Variety of the most choice ones; but not all she cou'd do was able to drive the Idea of *Montamour* from his Remembrance: In the Height of all the Gaiety with which *Tortillée* endeavour'd to divert him, he cou'd not forbear reflecting with how much more solid Felicity he had pass'd his Hours with the other; the more he saw of her Behaviour, the less careful she grew of disguising it, and the more he found in it to Disesteem. In spite of her well-acted Tenderness, and in spite of all her Instrument *Du Lache* had told him of her Sincerity, he cou'd not consider with what Facility she had granted him the greatest Favours, without a Suspicion that others might also have the same Freedom. To enhance his Admiration, she was perpetually telling him how many had sought her Affection; and by what he knew of her Humour, had little Reason to believe their Labour had been in vain. --- In fine, all her Actions, all her Words, serv'd only to shew him the prodigious Disproportion which was between those Charms she wou'd be thought to have, and those *Montamour* was really possess'd of. Tho' these kind of Reflections came frequently into his Mind, yet they had greater Force this Night than ever. He grew excessive melancholy on the sudden; and tho' both the Baroness and *Du Lache* took all imaginable Pains to exhilarate his Temper, their Endeavours were in vain; and finding it impossible for him to be any Company, begg'd Leave to retire. The Reader will easily imagine how much the Lady was alarm'd at a Behaviour so distant from her Expectations: She made use of all her Artifice, she wept, entreated, counterfeited Swoonings, but all fail'd of the Effect she aim'd at; and tho' *Du Lache* reminded him how uncourtly it was to leave a Lady who had receiv'd him in so generous a Fashion, he persisted in his Resolution, and only making a slight Excuse, took leave of her, accompany'd by *Du Lache*, who

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who wou'd not part from him till he had found out the Meaning of this Alteration.

It seem'd as if the unusual Sadness which seiz'd the Soul of *Beauclair*, and oblig'd him to quit the Baroness's House so much sooner than he intended, was influenc'd by *Fate*, on purpose to bring him to a Place, where he shou'd have a View of what wou'd give him Torments pretty near equal to those his late Deportment had inflicted on the disconsolate *Montamour*. He pass'd by the *Tuilleries* the very Moment that *Galliard* was conducting her out: She had too much Distraction in her Thoughts to have remember'd to have pull'd down her Hoods, and it being now just Day-break, her whole Face appear'd to the Eyes of her impatient Lover. In spite of all that *Du Lache*, *Toncarr*, and *Le Songe*, had told him of her Perfidiousness, he never could bring himself to a thorough Assurance of it; and there were some Moments in which he could not help believing all he had heard was false; but what Excuses now cou'd his Passion alledge against so positive an Appearance? To see her in a loose *Dishabillee*, at so irregular an Hour, --- in such a Place, and so accompany'd, was sufficient to justify whatever her worst Enemies cou'd suggest to her Prejudice. *Du Lache*, tho' he was infinitely rejoic'd at an Encounter which so unexpectedly favour'd his Designs, was unwilling that *Beauclair* shou'd take notice of her; with reason, fearing if they shou'd enter into a Conversation, it might produce something which might ruin all, and perswaded him to pass without speaking: But the other was too full of Rage to listen to the Arguments this artful Villain was preparing to prevent him, and stepping hastily to her, 'Tis an early Hour, Madam, said he, (with a Look and Gesture which sufficiently testify'd his Disorders,) for Ladies, such as *Montamour*, to be abroad! --- But I perceive you are not without a Guard, else I shou'd make offer of my Service to attend you. You have infinitely more agreeable Engagements on your Hands, answer'd she,
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(counterfeiting an Air of Gaiety,) and I think myself extremely happy in the Knowledge of your Humour, because it gives me the Liberty of indulging my own. She spoke no more, nor indeed had she the Power: The Pain she suffer'd in restraining the struggling Passions of her Soul, was very near throwing her again into that Condition from which *Galliard* had so lately recover'd her. These few Words, however, had the Effect she aim'd at, to sting *Beauclair* to the Quick; and wholly unable to contain himself, If there be any Thing like a Change in my Humour, (resum'd he impatiently,) *Montamour* ought, indeed, to approve it, since I but follow an Example she gave me. If she had heard this, it might perhaps have made her reply in a manner, which wou'd have given him some Light into the Arts by which they both had been impos'd on: But her Agitations were too violent to permit her to stay; she was remov'd several Paces from him, and he thought it would look like Mean-spiritedness to follow her, after what he had *seen*, which seem'd to be so great a Confirmation of all he had been *told*. In short, both believing themselves injur'd, each disdain'd to do any Thing which might appear like a Desire of Reconciliation: And this little Pride, fatal alike to the Repose of both, gave the common Deceivers all the Opportunity they could wish to compass their pernicious Ends, of separating two Hearts, which, by all the Ties of Gratitude and Tenderness, were thought to be cemented.

When *Montamour* was come home, and the first Emotions of her Passions a little abated, she began to consider with more Sedateness on this Adventure; and being unable to find any reasonable Excuse for *Beauclair's* Behaviour, resolv'd to tear him from her Heart: She foresaw it would cost her most terrible Pangs, but yet it must be done; and therefore the sooner she endeavour'd it, the better. But tho' she found no great Difficulty in the forming this Resolution, she did in fixing on what means she shou'd
make

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make choice of for the Execution of it. To think to displace him by entertaining the Idea of any other Man, was vain; there was none who in the Perfections of either Mind or Body cou'd vie with the charming *Beauclair*, much less exceed him: Neither cou'd she hope that Variety of Company, or Diversions, wou'd so far amuse her, as to make her forget him, but, on the contrary, more remind her how little, in Competition with the soft Hours of mutual Love, are those pass'd in that Hurry which the mistaken World calls Pleasure. Such an Alteration in her Behaviour, she consider'd, might endanger her *Reputation*, but ne'er restore her *Quiet*. Therefore, after many disturb'd Reflections, a *Cloister* seem'd the only *Asylum* where she cou'd hope for Peace; the Duties of Religion so strictly practis'd in those Places, the pious Examples, and heavenly Conversation of the holy *Sisterhood*, she doubted not wou'd set her Mind at ease, and raise her Wishes beyond worldly Views. When she consider'd with what a Sublimity of Tenderness she had regarded *Beauclair*, she look'd upon it as a *Sin*, for which she was justly punish'd in his *Inconstancy*: She accus'd herself of Sacrilege, in paying to a *Mortal* that Adoration *Heaven* alone had Claim to, and vow'd to devote the remaining Part of her Life to Penitence for that Transgression. She was extremely strengthen'd in this Design by her *Confessor*: She had a large Fortune in her own Possession, which, on her embracing a monastick Life, wou'd be wholly employ'd in the Service of Mother *Church*; of which he was too true a *Son* to let slip so fair an Opportunity of Advantage: He magnify'd the Comforts of Retirement, and the innate Contentment which flows from an entire abandoning the World, in so florid and perswasive a Stile, that in spite of all that her Brother, and other Relations and Acquaintance, cou'd do to dissuade her, she went into a Nunnery about four Leagues distant from *Paris*, fully determin'd to take Orders as soon as her Year of Probation shou'd be expir'd.

While

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While *Montamour* was thus employ'd in endeavouring to vanquish an Inclination she thought so ill plac'd, *Beauclair* was using his utmost Efforts for a Conquest of the same Nature. Her Behaviour, when he met her with *Galliard*, made her appear more vile than even *Du Lache* and his Adherents had represented her: He cou'd not think he had ever lov'd her, without being asham'd of his Affection. --- *Tortillée* seem'd now less faulty in his Opinion: --- He believ'd her guilty of no other Failings than what were incident to her Sex; for if *Montamour* was false, he imagin'd all Women must be so. An honourable Passion was what, for the future, he resolv'd to avoid, and being enter'd in an Amour with the Baroness, fancy'd he might pass his Hours in her Company with as much Felicity, as in any others. To make the Favours he receiv'd from her as great a Blessing as possible, he took abundance of Pains to establish a Tenderness in his Soul on her Account, like what he formerly had felt for *Montamour*: But how much did he deceive himself in such an Attempt! the lovely Maid, all guilty as she seem'd, maintain'd her Empire still; the more he struggl'd with his Chains, the more he found the Impossibility of breaking them; and what he endur'd in the Conflict between *Passion* and *Resentment* was almost insupportable. But, despising himself for what he thought so great a Weakness, he resolv'd to do nothing that shou'd give the World occasion to suspect what pass'd within his Soul; and to that end, paid his Devoirs to the Baroness in a more assiduous Manner than he wou'd have done, perhaps, had Inclination only prompted him.

This mischievous Woman now exulted with a malicious Joy at the Knowledge of her *Rival's* Grief; for, in spite of all that Lady's Caution, it was soon blaz'd abroad, that she was miserable in the Loss of *Beauclair*. The Condition in which *Galliard* had found her in the *Tuilleries* was no Secret; for tho' the Esteem he had for her oblig'd him to conceal her

Name,

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Name, it cou'd not restrain him from diverting himself and Companions with the Relation of such an Adventure ; and *Du Lache*, being with *Beauclair* when he was conducting her out, made him know it was she herself, and not *Sansfoy*, who had come thither to observe the Baronels; so that between them the whole Affair soon grew the common Chat of every Tea-Table: And it was the Knowledge of being thus expos'd, which doubtless, more than any Thing, made *Montamour* deaf to all the Perswasions of her Friends from a monastick Life. *Beauclair* was soon inform'd of her Resolution ; but whatever he felt within himself seem'd little to regard it, and was in Reality not sorry she had taken Measures which wou'd render it impossible for him ever to let her know the Power she had over him ; and being allow'd, and indeed *courted* to take all imaginable Freedom with the Baronels, whoever had seen him with her wou'd have believ'd his Soul was wholly her's : But in spite of all the Pleasure this wicked Woman conceiv'd in the Opinion she was Mistress of a Heart, the united Beauties of the whole Sex, without an equal Proportion of Wit and Virtue, was insufficient to deserve, in spite of the unequall'd, inexpressible Graces he was possess'd of, she cou'd not resolve to be his alone ; *Sonville*, *St. Aumar*, *Le Soube*, and others, had the same Liberties with her as before ; but, as I have already taken Notice, she had her particular Places of Assignment with them all, and *Beauclair* had not the least Suspicion of any Rivals in his Happiness, and was pretty near an Infatuation equal to that her Artifices had wrought on the unhappy Baron.

Thus all Things for a while went smoothly on, till one unhappy Day had like to have made a total Discovery of her Falshood to him, whom it was most her Interest to deceive. *Beauclair*, as well as others of her Admirers, frequently visited her at Home ; and happening to come one Afternoon, and finding her in her Bedchamber, no Company with her, the Baron
abroad,

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abroad, and she in a loose Undress, (in which indeed she look'd most amiable,) he could not resist a sudden Inclination to make use of so favourable an Opportunity; and taking her in his Arms, and throwing her on the Bed, was about to repeat at *Home* what many Times she had condescended to *Abroad*: The Violence of his present Desire, and the Extacy she was in, to find him so much more than ordinarily transported, depriv'd them both of that Caution they were accusom'd to make use of: The Chamber-Door was only carelessly put to; and the Baron chancing to return, and come into that very Room, was struck with a Sight, which no other Witnesses but his own Eyes cou'd have convinc'd him had been true. He wou'd have drawn his Sword, and wash'd the Stain they cast upon his Honour with the Blood of both, but Astonishment took from him the Power. She was in a Posture, such as cou'd have left no other Woman a Possibility of Excuse; but so ready was she at Invention, and so cunning in deceiving, that even in this, the greatest Tryal she cou'd meet, she brought herself off with a Dexterity which prov'd how much she was Mistress of the Art of Jilting: Her Face lying toward that Side of the Room where her Husband enter'd, she had an Opportunity of seeing him immediately, and before *Beauclair* cou'd have any Imagination of the Truth, the Person who in his Arms that Moment was uttering Raptures, amaz'd him, on a sudden, with struggling to get loose, and crying out, *Help! O help! --- a Rape!* --- Where are my Servants? --- Will none come to my Assistance? --- For Heaven's sake Monsieur desist: --- I'll rather die than live to wrong the best of Men and Husbands. Then disengaging herself from his Embrace, and running to the Baron, (pretending not to have seen him before,) O my dear Lord! said she, how opportunely are you come to save me from Dishonour, from Ruin, from *Death*; for sure I wou'd have flown for Refuge to the *latter*, rather than have endur'd,

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dur'd the *former*. The barbarous Man, (added she, bursting into well-disssembled Tears,) wou'd have depriv'd me of all I value Life for: --- He wou'd have violated my Innocence, --- corrupted my Duty, --- made me utterly unworthy of my dear Lord's Affection; --- and finding his impious Perswasions were in vain, he wou'd have *forc'd* me to the horrid Deed, --- a Deed my Soul abhors! --- a Deed which must have made me hateful both to Heaven and Earth! --- Oh! had I not been inspir'd for some Moments with an unusual Strength, and had not my Heart's Treasure, my dear, dear *Baron*, come to my Assistance just when that Strength began to fail, how wretched had I been! --- O be ever prais'd ye Saints and Angels! ye ministring Spirits, the Guardians of my Honour, for your Protection in this dreadful Hour! --- O still continue watchful o'er your Charge, and save me ever from Infamy and Guilt! She fell on her Knees, and pronounc'd these last Words in so exotic a Manner, and with a Countenance so exactly suited to every Thing she said, that *Beauclair* was much more startled at her Impiety and Dissimulation than he had been, when, rising from the Bed, he perceiv'd who it was that occasion'd it. The Scene must certainly have been pleasant enough to observe, if any disinterested Person had been Witness of it: To behold a couple of Men stand gazing on each other without Power of Speech or Motion, while a Woman was acting over a thousand various Passions in Gestures and Grimaces, suited to them all; --- sometimes rejoicing at the *Deliverance* she pretended to have had; --- sometimes feigning to look back with Horror on her past *Danger*; --- now *weeping*, as it were, thro' *Tenderness*; --- then *exclaiming* against the Baseness of Mankind; --- with one Breath *curfing* her own Charms, for being the Occasion of inspiring loose Desires; --- and with the next, *blesfing* Heaven for giving her the Means of resisting them. The Surprise which both the Husband and Lover were in, gave her sufficient Opportunity to
exercise

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exercise her Talent; but as *Beauclair* was Master of a much greater Presence of Mind than the Baron, so he recollected himself much sooner; and perceiving the Lady was very capable of making her Party good with her believing Husband, thought, in such a Circumstance, the most prudent Action he cou'd do was to retire. The first Thing he had done after he started from the Bed was to snatch up his Sword, not doubting but he shou'd have occasion to make use of it; but finding he was not immediately call'd to the Account he expected, took the Advantage of the *Baron's* Confusion, and left him to adjust Matters with his Spouse, as they shou'd agree it between 'em, only telling him, as he went out of the Room, that if he imagin'd himself injur'd, he knew where to demand Satisfaction. He staid not for an Answer; nor had the other recover'd himself enough, as yet, to make one. He continu'd, for some Moments after *Beauclair* was gone, fix'd in the same stupid Posture he had been in ever since he came into the Room; till, at last, the hurried Spirits beginning by little and little to resume their proper Stations, he fetch'd a deep Sigh, and breaking from his Wife, who had all this while been holding him in her Arms, walk'd hastily to and fro, by that Action only discovering the inward Disorders that oppress'd him: But what is it that is not in the Power of a Person belov'd to accomplish? What a commanding Force there dwells in Tears, when flowing from the Eyes we worship! They give the Lye to Reason, and make our very Senses but unavailing Witnesses, when oppos'd to any Thing they wou'd insinuate. The tender-hearted *Baron* at first testify'd the secret Yieldings of his Soul but by a Look; but she, who perfectly understood the Language of the Eyes, immediately knew her Work was more than half compleated; and assuming an Air all full of Languishment and Softness, I have liv'd too long, said she, (in a dying, trembling Accent,) I have liv'd too long, since, my dear Lord, the only Man, Heav'n knows, I ever wish'd to please, regards me
with

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with Indifference: --- Is this dumb Coldness, or this distant Posture a Proof of that Passion you have sworn thou'd be unchangeable, or a fit Welcome for a Wife, rescued by Providence from threaten'd Ruin? O my only Dear, my Love, my Life, my Husband, continu'd she, (seizing his Hand, and clapping it to her Mouth with a well counterfeited Transport,) take, take me to your Breast, or kill me. There needed no more to make the poor *Baron* quite besides himself; his Soul, before overcome by soft Emotions, now quite dissolv'd and melted in a Sea of Tendernefs: He clasp'd the Syren in his faithful Arms, kiss'd her disssembling Lips; and while he spoke the fondest, most endearing Words that Tongue e'er utter'd, or Heart e'er conceiv'd, a Flood of honest Tears stream'd from his Eyes, and bath'd her treacherous Bosom. O thou art all Divine, cry'd he, in a Rapture, all Angel! thy *Mind*, like thy bright *Body*, charming! pure and untainted with any of the Frailties of thy Sex! dear to *Reason*, and ravishing to *Sense*! And then again, Let me no longer live than I adore thee, (pursued the affectionate Deluded,) thou Excellence! --- thou lovely Abstract of all that's good in Woman! 'Tis not to be doubted but that she answered those tender Expressions, and return'd the Caresses he gave her, in a Manner which seem'd to him to proceed from, at least, an equal Ardency; and this Accident was so far from lessening her in his Esteem, that it made her, if possible, dearer than before. He was too little acquainted with Artifice himself, to imagine there was a Possibility for the woman he ador'd to be Mistress of so much: The entire Confidence he always had of her Love and Virtue was now in as full Force as ever; and all those Notions which had crowded into his Soul at his first coming into the Chamber, and beheld so unexpected, and, indeed, so distracting a Sight, now vanish'd, and were no more remember'd. Love, now triumphant Love! unmix'd with Fears, with Jealousies, or Doubts, blaz'd with Almighty Lustre, and struck all other Remon-

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Remonstrances dead. He thought he look'd into her very Soul, and found it all Perfection: Nothing that he cou'd wish were alter'd, except a little too much Freedom and Condescension in her Behaviour, which, tho' he believ'd altogether innocent and undesign'd, which he thought might have encourag'd *Beauclair* to hope greater Favours. He did not fail to acquaint her what his Sentiments were on that Score, and conjur'd her for the sake of his eternal Quiet, and her own Honour and Reputation, to endeavour to wear a more distant and reserv'd Air in her Conversation with those Men, whose Principles she was not perfectly assur'd of. This Advice, tho' accompanied with ten thousand soft Professions, and given with the greatest Complaisance, relish'd but ill with her who 'twas apply'd to; but she had Policy enough to conceal her Chagrin, pretended to think as he did, and assur'd him, in all the seeming good Humour imaginable, that for the future she would be more wary. But from that Moment she conceiv'd an inexpressible Hatred for him: If he had Eyes to see a Failing in her Conduct, she knew not, but in Time, he might gather Courage to condemn, or to controul it; and the bare Thoughts that there was a Possibility she might one Day be debarr'd from taking the Liberties she now enjoy'd, made her almost distracted: If this meddling Husband was to be no longer *blinded*, he must be *remov'd*. Murder was now the Employment of her Thoughts, and seem'd so absolutely necessary for the Security of her Pleasures, that she found no Shock, or such as she could easily pass over, in resolving to undertake it; and she would most certainly have found some Means to perpetrate her horrid Intentions, if her Agent in all mischeivous Enterprizes, *Du Lache*, had not advis'd her to another, tho' almost as *execrable*, yet a less *dangerous* Method of getting rid of him. He procur'd a Potion compos'd of such pernicious Drugs, that tho' it wou'd not absolutely destroy Life, and drive the Soul from her tormented Habitation, yet it had that unhappy Effect

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Effect on all the sensitive Faculties, as to reduce the Person who shou'd swallow it to a Condition little preferable to that of an Ideot.

This cursed Mixture did that Monster of a Woman give to her unsuspecting Husband; and while his tender, truly generous Soul was wholly taken up with the Study how to please her, himself was sinking into the most miserable State that Hell-bred Mischief could invent. At first he was seized with a Lethargy of Thought; a kind of lazy Stupefaction hung on his Spirits, which every Day encreasing, at last overwhelm'd the Throne of Reason; Reflection was unhing'd; the noble Seat of Memory fill'd with Chimera's and disjointed Notions; wild and confus'd Ideas whirl'd in his distracted Brain; and all the Man, except the Form, was chang'd.

The *Baroness's* shameful Conduct was too visible to the World for any Body to wonder at her Husband's Frenzy; and tho' every one pitied the Condition they saw him in, yet there was none that had the least Suspicion she had made use of any other Means to bring him into it, than what was publick. She suffer'd him to continue a few Days in Town after his *Delirium*; but then, under the Pretence that Change of Air might be of Service, sent him down to a little Village about forty Miles from *Paris*, where she had him boarded at a cheap Rate, out of his large Estate scarce affording him the common Necessaries of Life.

Now all the gay, loose Part of her Acquaintance of both Sexes, which, to pleasure him for a little Time, she had pretended to discard, return'd with usual Freedom to her House: Her Drawing-Room was every Day fill'd with Visitants, her Antichamber with Musicians, and her Hall with Attendants: The whole Dwelling became a Scene of Luxury;—Dancing, Singing, Playing, Drinking, Feasting, all that cou'd charm the Sense might here be found in full Profuseness of Satiety. But tho' these Entertainments were ravishing to most of the Company they were

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Prepar'd for, *Beauclair* had no Relish for 'em: His Morals were too excellent, and his Soul too much refin'd and delicate, to be pleas'd with those gross Debaucheries he daily saw acted there. The *Baroness*, whom a long time he had but little esteem'd, especially since that monstrous Diffimulation with which he was Witness she treated her Husband, now appeared odious in his Eyes: His good Manners would not permit him to desist wholly from visiting her; but he never staid long, and went not so often as he had been accusom'd. He made no Scruple of letting *Du Lache* know his Sentiments, when he was ask'd by him the Reason of estranging himself. But the other took not now the Pains he had done to conceal the *Baroness's* Vices: He knew that *Beauclair* was now grown as indifferent to her as any of his Predecessors, or Cotemporaries; and that to preserve his good Opinion was a Thing she gave herself not the least Concern about. All the Thoughts of this inconstant Woman were at present taken up with young *La Branche*, one of the most vain, conceited Coxcombs in the Town; one who had no other Merit, no other Charm, than his being a new Conquest, to engage her; tho' worthless as he was, there was a Girl, to whom he formerly had made court, that valued his Conversation at a very high Rate, and endeavour'd by Letters, Messages, and all the Stratagems that her Passion could invent, to retrieve the fickle Heart of this ungrateful Lover. The Knowledge that there was a Rival in the Way, always made the *Baroness's* Desires more eager: To give *Disquiet* to her own Sex, heighten'd her Satisfaction in the Enjoyment of the other. She was of that malicious, one may justly say, indeed, devilish Disposition, that her chief Pleasure consisted in the inflicting Pain; wanting the Poignancy of *Revenge*, not all the Joys that *Love* affords (warm as her Inclinations were) had any Relish. The Embraces of a God, *unenvy'd*, would have been tasteless and insipid: No longer than his Engagement with another kept her

in

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in Suspence was the Marquis *de Sonville*, the Object of her Affection: When the Continuance of *St. Aumar's* Addresses to her, render'd him despis'd by all the other Women of his Acquaintance, he became immediately so by her; and her Apprehensions of *Montamour* no sooner were remov'd, than *Beauclair* was disregarded: A kind Look from that insignificant Trifler, *La Brance*, was now of greater Value with her than all the Caresses of these accomplish'd Gentlemen. The unfortunate young Creature that lov'd him, was now the Sacrifice which her insatiate Pride requir'd; and the whole Time and Invention of *Du Lache* was now employ'd in Means to compass it.

But how fond soever the Baronefs was of a new Intrigue, Heav'n never form'd a Man whose Charms cou'd oblige her to discontinue any of her former ones; nor was she ever so much overwhelm'd in Passion as not to know how to conceal it, whenever she found occasion: Whenever any one of her Admirers took Notice, that she regarded another with more Tenderness than he approv'd of, she had a Method of silencing his Doubts as *artful* as it was *base*; she pretended that the Person suspected was only indulg'd by her in some little Freedoms, to take off all Imagination of a real Amour between him and a certain Lady of her Acquaintance; and then, if press'd to it, wou'd frame a long Story of some Woman, no matter who, but any body that came into her Head at that Time was made the Property to bear her Shame: The Truth is, indeed, she kept no Company, whom any Thing she said cou'd make appear much worse than in Reality they were. By this Means she prevented any Quarrels from arising between her Lovers, and preserv'd to herself a Reputation with them which she was very far from deserving. She was also extremely indebted to her good Fortune, that all this while, among so many, she had hitherto to do only with Men whose Honour wou'd not permit them to boast of a Lady's Favours: And something too, I think, she ow'd to their want of Penetration, as well

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as her own Artifice, that she cou'd so long and so easily impose on their Judgments.

If *La Branche* had been of the same Disposition and Principles with the others, she might, perhaps, have retain'd the good Opinion of them all something longer than she did; but that Wretch was too much elevated with his good Fortune, in being belov'd by a Woman of the Baroness's Quality, to conceal it: He talk'd of her wherever he came, toasted her as a Mistress, read her Letters publicly, and was so careless in putting them up, as to lose two of 'em; which happening to fall into the Hands of an Intimate of the Marquis *de Sonville*, were immediately brought to him. Never was any Surprise superior to that of this Gentleman, when he found what they contain'd; nor Rage equal to that he flew into, at reflecting on the Indignity she offer'd to his Merit; for in the whole Course of his Amour with her, never had she made a more passionate Declaration of Love to him, then he now found she had done to *La Branche*: The more he consider'd on the Worthlessness of the Fellow, the more he grew enrag'd; and resolving to be reveng'd on her Meanness of Spirit, on her Perfidy and Ingratitude, set himself to study what Measures he shou'd take to expose her, and make her appear as vile and as detestable to the whole World, as she was grown to him. His Resentment soon inspir'd him with a Thought lucky enough for his Purpose: He knew that the next Day was that on which she kept her Assembly, and had generally a greater Affluence of Company on that than any other Day: He went not till it was pretty late, that he believ'd they were all met, because he was desirous to have as many Witnesses as possible of what he did. He came into the Room with his usual Gaiety of Air, entirely dissembling his Chagrin; and stepping up to the Baroness, who was at a little Table busily engag'd at *Ombre* with *St. Aumar* and the young Count *de la Torre*, I thought, Madam, (said he to her, after having look'd round the Room, and

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and seen he was not there) to have found Monsieur *la Branche* among this good Company: By Accident some Letters directed for him have fallen into my Possession, and I wou'd willingly have restor'd 'em. For Heaven's sake let me see them, cry'd the jealous *Baroness*, presently imagining they had been sent to him by her Rival. No, Madam, reply'd the *Marquis*, since your Curiosity wou'd lead you to examine the Contents, I will save you the Trouble, and read them myself aloud, that all here may partake of the Diversion they will afford. He had no sooner spoke than all the Gentlemen and Ladies in in the Room, among whom were Montieur *Beauclair* and old *Le Sourbe*, flock'd to the Place where he was standing, and prepar'd to give Attention, while he pull'd one of the Letters out of his Pocket, and began to read as follows :

To the Dearest of Mankind, the Lovely and Accomplish'd LA BRANCHE.

HOW can you pretend to Love, and yet deny me the only Joy I have in Life! what Excuse can you make for not coming as you promis'd? The Day, indeed, that curs'd detested Thing call'd Business may engross, but Love and I might surely claim the Night! ---

He was not permitted to proceed: The *Baroness*, who from the first Word had discover'd a strange Uneasiness and Confusion in her Behaviour, now started from her Chair, and running to him, and endeavouring to snatch the Paper out of his Hand: Hold, my Lord, said she, trembling with the inward Disorders of her Soul; I conjure you by all you fear above, or love below, not to expose the Contents of that Letter. Your Ladyship is unkind, (interrupted *De la Torre*, who knew her well enough to guess the Reason of her Concern,) we all have cause to complain of your Want of good Nature, in endeavouring

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to deprive us of an Entertainment which the Marquis promises so much Diversion in. I cannot (resum'd she, recollecting herself as much as possible) suffer the Secret of my Friend to be divulg'd: --- That Letter is from a Woman I entirely love; and tho' I writ it for her to prevent any Discovery, yet 'tis possible some here, by the Contents, may guess the Person. --- I doubt not, Madam, (answer'd the *Marquis*,) but that every body will; but, (pursu'd he ironically,) I have so vast a Regard for the *Baroness de Tortillée*, that I cannot consent to bury in Obscurity so uncommon a Proof of her good Nature, as the signing her *own Name* to a Complaint such as this. How! cry'd all the Company with one Voice, her *own Name*! and immediately a loud Laughter ensu'd among the *Women*, and Signs of an universal Consternation among the *Men*. The revengeful *Marquis* observ'd it with Pleasure, and was about to go on with the Letter; but the *Baroness* quite besides herself with Passion, still struggling to get it from him, for some Moments retarded his Design, till finding her continue obstinate, he thought fit to shew that he was resolv'd to be so too; and holding it above her reach, and gently putting her off, 'Twere too much, Madam, (resum'd he, with a malicious Smile,) to do so much for the Service of a Friend, and yet be deny'd the Praises due to so elevated a Sincerity! --- You must and shall receive the Glory which your Actions merit; and if you *now* prevent me, the publick News Papers *to morrow* shall proclaim your Virtues. 'Twould be impossible to represent the Violence of her Rage, when she found, that neither Entreaties nor Commands were of force to oblige him to stifle this Testimony of her Infamy: She rav'd like one distracted; call'd him ten thousand Villains; and perceiving herself on the very Brink of being exposed in the most shameful Manner imaginable, no hope from Artifice, no Relief from Dissimulation, she threw the Mask of Softness off; unheard-of Curses issued from her Mouth; her Eyes shot Fire; in all
her

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her Air the Fury stood confess'd; and quitting the Marquis, and looking wildly round on the rest of the Company, (who waited with Impatience for the End of this Adventure,) and seeing none offer to assist her in wresting this fatal Paper from the Hand that held it, she flew out of the Room, wishing eternal Damnation on 'em all. The Indignation and Confusion she express'd was so great a Gratification of the Marquis's Spleen, that he had certainly follow'd her to prosecute the Raillery he had so tormentingly began; but that to fully satiate his Revenge, it was necessary he shou'd stay where he was, since he cou'd never meet with a fitter Opportunity than what offer'd at present for the making her appear what she really was before so many Persons, some of which he knew wou'd not fail to blaze it: And every Body crowding about him, he immediately proceeded with the Letter, which continu'd to declare the Passion it began with, in these Words:

Languishing for your Approach, and all dissolving in the pleasing Expectation of those Joys your dear-lov'd Presence brings, some Hours slid soft away; but when the Time was pass'd, what Horror! what inconceivable Inquietudes ensu'd! My Heart, so lately the Seat of Rapture, was now fill'd with racking Doubts, and torturing Jealousy! --- What shall I do? --- I am wild with Apprehension; --- the Memory of past Delights but heighten present Woes: --- O La Branche! shou'd you, indeed, forsake me, not Hell contains a Wretch more curst than I. --- But sure it cannot be! --- That lovely Form can harbour no Deceit. --- 'Twas my ill Fortune, but not thy Fault, that all the Night my longing Arms were stretch'd in vain to grasp thee. Thy Soul, I know, thy Wishes, all were mine! --- Make haste my Love, my Life! My Angel, make haste to give and take such Joys, as but in Idea to the vulgar World are known, tho' real and substantial to the charming La Branche, and his

Passionately fond

TORTILLEE.

K 4

Methinks,

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Merhinks, said the Marquis, here is neither want of Passion or Softness in this Billet, to make the Author ashamed of its being read; but this is nothing to what this Prodigy of her Sex can do! --- Here is (continu'd he) a Testimony of her Abilities, in which several of this Company have some Concern. --- In speaking these Words he took out the other Letter, and without staying to hear what Reply any Body wou'd make, added to the Surprise they were already in, by the Reading these Lines.

To my Soul's Treasure, the most Adorable
LA BRANCHE.

IF Jealousy betokens Love, how happy should I think myself in receiving so many Proofs of yours? But say, thou dear Destroyer of my Peace! charming Unbeliever! say, what must I do to convince thee that I am, --- that I can be only thine! --- Oh! didst thou know thyself, thy own unequall'd Charms were a sufficient Security for my Truth! --- What is there in Man desirable, that my La Branche does not possess in so eminently distinguish'd a Degree, that the whole Sex beside are worthless Nothings when compar'd with him! --- You seem to make it an Occasion of Complaint, that I admit of so much Company; but tell me, how can I avoid it? --- How can a Woman of my Quality, without becoming the Subject of Ridicule, refuse the Visits of Persons of her own Rank, and who call themselves her Husband's Friends? That hated Fatal Tie, alas! obliges me to many Things contrary to my Inclination. Besides, as he is now from Home, and under that unhappy Indisposition which all, but me, lament, shou'd I deny the Conversation of those he esteem'd, and those whom I can find no plausible Pretence for breaking with, wou'd it not be evident enough to the judging World 'twas for the sake of some dear unknown Favourite I did so? By a promiscuous Acquaintance I shun the Infamy of being too fond of one; and 'tis by this Method

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Method alone that I can secure my Love and my Reputation. It is for thee!----for thee! Lovely, cruel Susceptor, as thou art! for one dear, undisturb'd, untalk'd-of Hour with thee, I undergo the uneasy Task of dissembling in Publick! and to conceal my real Tenderneſs for thee, wear a pretended one to all!----Methinks you ſhou'd approve an Act of Prudence ſo convenient for us both, and ought to know me better than to imagine I am ſo loſt to Honour, or have a Soul ſo little delicate, as to ſtoop to a Plurality of Amours.----No, no, I am for nothing leſs than the moſt Excellent of his Sex!----to vanquiſh a Heart, till now a Foe profeſ'd to Love, and all its tender Follies, and triumph over a Virtue eſtabliſh'd like mine, it was neceſſary there ſhould be a *La Branche*! Thoſe whom your groundleſs Fears point out as Rivals, either becauſe their Quality obliges me to treat them with a greater Share of Civility than I do others, or becauſe you conſider them as Men of more Merit than the Generality of thoſe you have ſeen with me, are in Reality the Objects of my Aversion and Diſdain; if there be any Thing like Perfection in any of them, 'tis hid amidſt a Crowd of Faults: The Count de la Torre has indeed ſome Wit and Spirit, but then he is inſufferably Insolent, Robuſt, and Vain:---Moſt People allow that the Chevalier St. Aumar has good Nature, and an agreeable Perſon, but at the ſame Time make a Feſt of his Underſtanding:---Thoſe who are pleas'd with the bon Mein and Air of the Marquis de Sonville, deſpiſe him for his Pride and Oſtentation:---Beauclair's refin'd Manner of Converſation, good Addreſs, and Sublimity of Genius, can never make Amends for his Want of Sincerity, and Affectation of a Paſſion for all Women, which he has not Stability of Temper enough to make him truly feel for one, any more than old Le Sourbe's Weakneſs can counterballance his other Deficiencies.---Wretches! Wretches! all unworthy of your Fears, as they are of my Regard, and, with my Husband, equally odious to my Soul's fond Wiſhes:---Name them no more, unleſs you'd have all Deſire in me grow ſick, and at your next Em-

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brace receive into your Arms a senseless Log instead of

Your most Transported,

Melting, Longing, Dying

TORTILLEE.

The Marquis had no sooner concluded the Reading this Epistle, than every Mouth in the Company was opening to express the various Sentiments which the Hearing it inspir'd in each of them : But Count *de la Torre*, whose Soul had burn'd with fierce Impatience from the Mention made of him, got the Start of all the rest, in revenging on her Character the Reflection she had made on his ; and as he was naturally passionate, and a little regardless of the Reputation of those Women that put themselves in his Power, now thinking there was not the least Obligation for Secrecy, said enough to let every Body know, that she once took as much Pains to convince *him* of her Sincerity, as now she did *La Branche*. The Marquis *de Sonville* was not more generous ; but Monsieur *le Sourbe* and the Chevalier spoke not a Word. Both these Gentlemen had bore a true Affection to the Baroness, and were too much confounded at these strange and unexpected Discoveries of her Perfidy, to be able to reply to any Thing that was said. *Beauclair* observ'd it ; and tho' he never knew what 'twas to feel a serious Passion for her, was as much nettled as the others ; but he dissembled his Chagrin, and putting on a Countenance which had more in it of Disdain than Anger, For my part, said he, I find no Cause of Wonder, but the Sight of yours : My Acquaintance with this Lady has been of a much shorter Date than most of yours, yet in the little Time I have convers'd with her, I have seen enough not to be surpris'd at this Testimony of the Levity of her Temper : Those two Gentlemen (continu'd he, pointed to *St. Aumar* and *Le Sourbe*) have, perhaps, been ignorant of each other's Happiness :

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ness: Each believ'd himself the only favour'd, and glory'd in a Self-Sufficiency of being able to please the *Constant*, the *Distinguishing Tortillée*. The *Constant*, the *Distinguishing Tortillée*, as yourself once thought her, good Monsieur, interrupted a pert Lady, (who stood near him, and who from *Sansfoy* had learn'd the whole Secret,) do not imagine that your Intrigue with her has been invisible to all Eyes but your own; the whole Town knows she has had Arts to blind even the discerning *Beauclair*, or he wou'd not, for her sake, have abandon'd so deserving a Woman as *Montamour*. True, Madam, true, (said a Gentleman that was by,) that unhappy Lady you mention'd had not been reduc'd to so sad a Condition as Monsieur *Galliard* found her in the *Tuilleries*, if the Baroness had never seem'd more worthy of Regard; nor had she forsook the World for a Cloyster, if Monsieur *Beauclair* had always profess'd the same Indifferency as now. That is an Affair of which nobody is ignorant, added another. Yet, resum'd the Lady that spoke first, he has been as much deceiv'd in believing it a Secret, as he was in the Fidelity of his Mistress. There were several in the Room of both Sexes that seconded the Raillery she had begun on this Score; and *Beauclair*, who from the first Mention of *Montamour* had been struck with Remorse, and a kind of Self-Condernation, cou'd not presently recover his Presence of Mind, so far as to be able to answer them; and it was but with an half-assur'd Accent that he at last brought forth these Words: --- I know not well what 'tis you mean, (said he,) Mademoiselle *Montamour*, by all I ever saw of her Behaviour, was never ambitious of becoming a publick Chat: She is a Woman I ever *did*, and ever *shall* esteem: The Town is sensible I shou'd have marry'd her, had she been so dispos'd; but whatever Accident has happen'd to occasion our eternal Separation, I shou'd be sorry to think any one shou'd imagine a Bar so weak as the Baroness *de Tortillée*'s Artifices shou'd have Power to do it. Notwithstanding

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standing his Belief to the contrary, there were too many present that were acquainted with the Story to have let it rest so, if the Marquis *de Sonville*, willing in this grand Assembly of the best Part of her Acquaintance, to expose the Baroness as much as possible, had not turn'd the Conversation on the two silent Gentlemen, *St. Aumar* and *Le Sourbe*. It was a good while before one Word could be got from them; but when they spoke, it was in a Fashion which convinc'd the whole Company of what they before had Cause enough to suspect, that the Gratitude for Favours she had conferr'd, and the Astonishment at the Discovery of any others being Partakers in that Happiness, each of them had the Vanity to believe he had engros'd, had, till now, depriv'd them of the Power of Utterance. If the Marquis's Desire of Revenge had been rais'd by something more injurious than the petty Misfortune of a Mistress's Falshood, he found enough to gratify it: Every body now took the Liberty of speaking what they knew; and there being scarce one Person in the Room that was not privy to one, or more of her Intrigues, each now contributed their Part, and the whole Scene of all her monstrous Actions was laid open to them all. Never was Woman so expos'd and ridicul'd, ---- so despis'd and hated: Some took so great a Pleasure in affronting her, and the rest so little regarded her Resentment, that the being within her House, and probably within her Hearing, did not in the least hinder them from saying all that so ample a Field of Scandal to indulge in, cou'd give room to; till *Harriot* the Baroness's chief Woman coming in, told them her Lady was very much indispos'd, and not being able to return to the Company, desir'd they would dismiss. We'll send *La Branche* to comfort her, said the Marquis tartly. Ay, my Lord! pursu'd the Count, he has an Art of pleasing, to which, it seems, we are Strangers. However, let us not add to the Schedule of our Faults, that of Ingratitude: Be sure you tell the Lady, continu'd he, turning

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to Harriot, That *de la Torre*, and the other Gentlemen, she so handsomely gave a Description of, are infinitely obligated to her for the Pains she has taken to clear them of an Affair, of which none of them wou'd be proud. No, no, cry'd *Beauclair*, let *La Branche* possess alone the unenvy'd Happiness. *Tortillée* and *La Branche* (resum'd the Marquis) are only capable of pleasing each other, and indeed are only fit for one another, as this Fellow! (continu'd he, taking hold of *Du Lache*, who that Instant came into the Room, and giving him a scornful Turn,) this Pimp! this wretched Pander! is only fit for the vile Offices he is employ'd in. --- O forbear, my Lord! interrupted *De la Torre*, (with an Air and Voice full of Derision,) this ingenious Gentleman, but wears the Livery of the munificent Baroness, and must obey the Hand which feeds him! --- If he has made use of any Stratagems to deceive you, or me, or any here, 'twas to serve a Mistress who liberally rewarded the Procurer of her Pleasures: For my Part, I confess, tho' he has favour'd me sometimes with a Summons, not much unlike what just now your Lordship read, I never had Gratitude enough to make him any other Retribution than barren Thanks: Nor, perhaps, have any of you, Messieurs, been more bountiful: I think the least we can do, to recompence the Obligations he has conferr'd on us, is to recommend him to the Service of some *Italian Courtesan*, in whose Amours he would stand in admirable stead, and 'tis probable pick up for himself a more lasting Subsistence, than he can hope for from the precarious Dependance of his present Benefactress, whose Charms begin now to grow out of Date, and almost of as little Reputation as her *Virtue*. As crafty as this Villain was in making almost any Appearances subservient to his Ends, when he had Time for Deliberation, these sudden and unexpected Salutations entirely bereft him of all Artifice; he was now, as harmless, as undersigning as a Fool: He was, indeed, two or three

Times

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times about to speak, though he knew not what to say: He found that the Secret of the Baroness's Temper, and the Hand he had in her Conduct, were discover'd; but had neither Time to guess by what Means, nor to contrive any Expedient which might evade the Obloquy such a Discovery must bring on. 'Tis possible he might, at last, have muster'd Courage enough to ask what 'twas they meant; but the Chevalier *St. Aumar*, who, by the Reasons already mention'd, had all this while been prevented from making any outward Shew of his inward Disorders, having now got the better of his Surprise and Confusion of Thought, Rage took the whole Possession of his Soul. The Sight of *Du Lache*, and the Reflection how much he had suffer'd himself to be deceiv'd by the Artifices of that Villain, put him beyond all Patience: He drew his Sword, and running furiously at him as he was about to speak, had certainly silenc'd him for ever, if *Beauclair*, who happen'd to be next him, had not been quick enough to lay hold of his Arm. Hinder not, Monsieur, said he, the Hand of Justice: That Wretch is unworthy of Life; and since our Laws are but too deficient in punishing Crimes such as his, those, who like me he has wrong'd, have a Title to revenge themselves. It was with all the Difficulty in the World that *Beauclair*, the *Marquis*, and all the Company perswaded him to sheath the Sword; and, perhaps, all they cou'd say, to represent how much so despicable a Creature, both by his Birth and Principles, was below the Resentment of a Man of Honour, had been ineffectual, if Count *de la Torre* had not catch'd hold of the cowardly Wretch, who all this Time stood hanging down his Head and trembling, and bringing him to the irrag'd Chevalier, whose Arm he found *Beauclair* had still Possession of; See here, Monsieur, said he, when once Reflection gets the Mastery of Passion, how wou'd you blush to think you must be question'd in the King's Name why you depriv'd him of so worthless a Subject! 'Tis thus, and thus, (pursu'd he, giving him

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him two or three Kicks,) we shou'd chastise the Insolence of such Wretches. In speaking these last Words he turn'd him, who was glad of an Opportunity to make use of his Heels, out of the Room. No Body staid long after: All had been said and done that cou'd convince the *Baroness* her Reign was at an End; and now the Company separated, every one to think or talk of this Adventure as their several Sentiments of it prompted them. To the Ladies it was Matter enough of Diversion: Nothing can be more pleasing to those Women who set up for being admir'd, of which sort were most of this Assembly, than to see the Downfal of a reigning *Toast*: The prodigious Power the *Baroness* had, till now, maintain'd over so many Hearts, had long been the Envy of each pretending Fair; and to behold it sunk in a Moment, --- her Charms depriv'd of all their wonted Force, --- her Arts, her Blandishments no more effectual; --- Contempt in the place of Esteem, and Detestation in the room of Love, gave a Joy too exquisite to be describ'd by any Thing but itself: Their Looks, the chearful Accent of their Voices, whenever any Occasion offer'd to speak of this Affair, cou'd only demonstrate the secret Satisfaction glowing in their enliven'd Souls!

Of all the Men interested in this Discovery, only *Le Sourbe* was inconsolable: The Weakness of his Intellects, together with the Meanness of his Spirit, made him the most unfortunate Creature on Earth: He had fancied himself superlatively blest, distinguish'd from all the rest of Mankind, belov'd, admir'd, ador'd, caress'd by the most Lovely, most Ingenuous, most Faithful of her Sex; and now, at once, to find his Happiness imaginary, the Woman he had idoliz'd, he had worshipp'd as a *Goddess*, but meer *Mortal*, with all her Sex's Failings, truly eminent in nothing but Hypocrisy; the Favours he had receiv'd only the Overflowings of a *Luxurious* Appetite, or condescended to gratify a *Mercenary* one, made him almost distracted. He seem'd either never
to

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to have known, or to have forgot his own Imperfections, which if he had duly weigh'd, he could never have been deceiv'd into an Opinion, that a Woman neither old nor unlovely cou'd have been blind to 'em, and consequently 'scap'd a Disappointment so grievous. Not a Person of his Acquaintance but he told the Story to; making most pitiful Lamentations; saying how dearly he had lov'd the Baroness; how much he had studied to oblige her; what Presents he had made her; the Pleasure with which she had seem'd to accept of his Services; describ'd the a thousand-times repeated Endearments which had pass'd between them; and then, (bursting into a Flood of Tears,) Yet she is false! wou'd he cry, she is false! *forsworn to all the Gods and me!* The poor Wretch, to his other Fopperies, had also a passionate Affection for Rhiming, a Vanity almost as unbecoming to one of his Age, as Love: And now having two such Themes as *Despair* and the *Perfidy of a Mistress*, *Melpomene* was every Day invoc'd; the whole Town was persecuted with his Complaints in *Metre*; and 'tis hard to say, which suffer'd most in his publishing them, the Baroness's Reputation of *Honour*, or his own of *Understanding*.

Not in this Manner behav'd the Marquis de *Sonville*, the Count de la *Torre*, the Chevalier *St. Aumar*, and Monsieur *Beauclair*: The three former immediately enter'd into new Attachments, in the Pleasures of which the Memory of the old one was easily forgot; and the Condition of the latter was such as wou'd neither permit him to complain, to rail, or to condemn. He was not perhaps in so great a Surprise at the late Discovery of the Baroness's Humour as some others appeared to be, but the Treatment which he was witness *Du Lache* had receiv'd; and the Character he heard of him, was what involv'd him in the greatest Perplexity: He now began to imagine that there was more than a Probability that all he had been told of *Montamour* was false; and the Horror he conceiv'd at having suffer'd himself to be impos'd on to the Prejudice of that Lady's Reputation

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tion, and his own Inclinations, was such as Language is too weak to represent. Once he believ'd nothing could be a greater Misfortune than the Assurance she was unworthy his Affection; now he dreaded that he shou'd one Day be convinc'd she was but too meritorious. If she be innocent, said he to himself, what a Villain, what a Monster, must I have all this while appear'd? ---- Ignorant of the Arts by which I have been deluded, she must despise and hate me.---- What shall I do to acquire a Knowledge of the Truth?---- How find out the fatal Certainty of her Virtue? A Certainty which must for ever damn me to Despair, since Devil-like, I have renounc'd my Heaven; yet frightful as the Precipice appears, I must plunge in,---- must fathom the wild Abyss! --- must drag up *Confirmation*, tho' she comes waited on by all the Terrors of *Remorse*, Self-Condernnation, and the ever-during Sting of Conscience.--- Hell, Hell itself, affords no Torture like *Suspence*, cruel, distracting, sense-destroying *Suspence*!--- Give, give me, Fate, some Means to ease the present Anguish, and order all hereafter as thou pleasest. In this Manner, whenever he was alone, did he torment himself; and when in Company, no more appeared the Man he was: A sudden Cloud hung ever on his Brow; his once enlivening Conversation was now exchang'd for Peevishness; his Gallantry for cold Neglect; his gay Address for silent Churlishness; perpetual ill Nature and an incessant Gloom diffus'd itself thro' all his Air, and darken'd every Grace. Whenever he heard the Name of *Tortillée*, (as the prodigious Eclat the Adventure of the Letter to *La Branche* had made in Town, gave him frequent Occasions,) it fill'd him with mortal Disquiets; if that of *Montamour*, he was unable to contain himself. In this Confusion of Thought he sought *Du Lache*, resolving to force from him a Clue to guide him thro' a Labyrinth, which, at present, seem'd so intricate: But that Villain was no where to be found, and to hope for any from the *Baroness*, was ridiculous; besides, the Sight of her was now grown insupportable; and 'tis possible he would rather have remain'd for ever as he

was.

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was, than have been oblig'd to her for an *Eclaircissement*, had there been any Probability she would have been prevail'd on to make one. In these Perturbations let us leave him for a while, and see what became of those who had occasion'd them.

Du Lache, after receiving that contemptuous Usage from the *Marquis*, quitted not the *Baroness's* House; but being retir'd into an inner Room, a little to recollect and consider what it should be that occasion'd it, was seen by *Harriot*, and immediately directed to her Lady, whom he found in a Disorder scarce possible to conceive; yet wild and incoherent as her tempestuous Passion was, he soon discover'd what had happen'd, and join'd with her in exclaiming on the Vanity and Neglect of *La Branche*, who had so little Regard of a Lady's Reputation, as to suffer her Letters to be expos'd. He had also another Account to give of this unworthy Lover, which, if any Thing could have heighten'd the Fury she was already in, the Knowledge of would have done. Not all those Artifices which had triumph'd over the Judgment of so many Men of Sense, had been able to work the desir'd Effect on *La Branche*: Stupid as he was in every Thing else, in this he had the Advantage of those of the best Understanding; and, in spite of all that *Du Lache* and his politick Instructress could do, the young Woman, whose Engagements with him had perhaps been the greatest Motive which entitled him to be lov'd by the *Baroness*, was now going to take him from her for ever: They were to be married in a few Days; and this vile Woman had the just Mortification to be told, That to make Reparation for his former Transgression, he had bound himself in an Obligation never to see her more. To represent in what Manner she receiv'd this News, one had need be acquainted with the Inhabitants of *Bedlam*: Her Words, her Looks, her Air were all Distraction: --- She saw she was utterly undone with the *Marquis de Sonville*, the Count *de la Torre*, the Chevalier *St. Aumar*, *Beauclair*, and
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Le Sourbe; and to be abandon'd by the Man, for whose sake she had lost the Esteem and good Opinion of them all, was such a killing Stroke, as nothing cou'd enable her to support. Wanting the Means of Vengeance on those who had occasion'd it, her unavailing Rage recoil'd upon itself: She tore her Hair and Face, and bit her very Flesh in the Extremity of her Passion: It was not now in the Power of her Emissary, *Du Lache*, to say or do any Thing that could give her Consolation: The Case was now too desperate to admit Relief from any of those Stratagems he had formerly so well succeeded in: His Artifices were discover'd, and therefore no more effectual: He was now a known Deceiver; a Villain proclaim'd, as his Patroness was a Jilt; and all that either of them could do, was to vent some Part of their enervate Malice in Curses. After having rail'd themselves almost out of Breath against *La Branche*; the *Marquis*, and all who had seem'd to approve of his Proceeding, they began, as 'tis the Custom of all base People, when their Designs miscarry, to reflect one on another: You might have prevented all this, Madam, said he, but your ungovern'd Passion for *La Branche* would suffer you to listen to no Reasons. -- Villain, cried she, to what End have I heap'd unnumber'd Obligations on thee, but to engage thy subtle working Brain to procure my Pleasures, and protect my Fame? But stupid or ungrateful, thou hast ruin'd both: -- My Reputation's lost, my Love undone: The Earth contains not so forlorn a Wretch; yet thou canst calmly tell me, *This might have been prevented*: --- Yes, it might, had thy Management been equal to thy Boasting. Madam, what could I do? resum'd he; I never approv'd of your ent'ring into an Engagement with *La Branche*; I knew he was unfit, and therefore advis'd you. --- Thou Fool, interrupted the impatient *Baroness*, what Lover ever took Advice: His Humour, or his Principle being unsuited to my Purpose, made not his Form less pleasing

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sing to my Eyes: --- 'Twas thy Business to have wound thyself into his Soul, chang'd every Movement there, created it all a-new, and fashion'd it to my Design. Thus did each endeavour to lay the Blame of this Misfortune on the other; and the Dispute growing higher, at last it came to a down-right Quarrel, and they parted almost as ill satisfy'd with one another, as both were with the World.

Some Days past before they met again: The *Baroness* shut herself into her Chamber, and would see no Company; and *Du Lache* was beginning to think what Course of Life he must now take up, believing there was no more Profit to be expected from that he had lately profess'd. But he was too skilful an Engineer to be discarded so; when he had given over all Hope of ever being employ'd by her again, a Messenger came from the *Baroness* to let him know she desir'd to speak with him immediately. The Summons was too welcome not to be readily obey'd: He went, but found not the Business, what he imagin'd, to endeavour to reinstate her in the Affections of any of her former Lovers, or to contrive some plausible Pretence for the introducing her to a new one, but to assist her once more to get rid of her Husband, who was coming to call her to a dreadful Account for her Behaviour. She had just receiv'd News, that the *Baron's* Distemper having reach'd the Ear of a skilful Physician, who happen'd to be at that Time in the Country where she had dispos'd him, he attempted to cure it; which he had accomplish'd, to the Wonder of every Body who had been Witness of his Phrenzy; that this much-wrong'd Gentleman was preparing for *Paris*; and that the Person who had restor'd him to Reason, had also made him know, it was but by some supernatural Means that he so long had languish'd in the Want of it. This was a terrible Shock! a Blow, indeed, which all the Artifice of this guilty Pair was at a Loss for Means to parry. They spent some Time in bewailing their common Misfortune: She up-
braided

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braided *Du Lache* for his ill-tim'd Mercy, as she call'd it: I would have put an End to my Fears, said she, by taking away the Life of this Troubler of my Repose: Had your Advice not interpos'd, I had not now been so curs'd in the Apprehension that I must be oblig'd to answer for my past Conduct, and regulate the future:--- But for you, continu'd she, I might have been blest as my utmost Wish could make me, Mistress of myself, entire Possessor of the whole Fortune of this foolish *Baron*, and independant of the World's Opinion: Now I must flatter, sooth, cajole, and all, perhaps, in vain, for a precarious Subsistence. --- Wretched, wretched Fool, (cried she out, stamping, and biting her Nails,) to be thus perswaded contrary to my Interest, to my Inclinations, to my eternal Peace! --- Hold, Madam, hold, (interrupted he,) have Patience, 'tis not yet too late to prevent the Ills you dread; the Instruments of Death are still at hand; and when, like Fate, you give the Word, shall rush to Execution. The horrid Deed being thus resolv'd on, all they had to do was to contrive the Means to bring it about. After several Inventions form'd and rejected, because they were either unsafe, or unsure, it was at last pitch'd on, That she should write a most tender and passionate Letter, congratulating his Return of Health, and pressing his coming Home; that it should be convey'd to him by *Le Songe* and *Toncarr*, who were to pass as Servants she had lately taken into the Family, and recommended to attend him to *Paris*. This Way, said he, will certainly be the most effectual; for it will prevent him from hiring any Servants, who perhaps might be resolute enough to defend their Master, if our Friends should attack him on the Road; but being receiv'd by him in this Manner, he will be entirely in their Power, and they may have an easy Opportunity of dispatching him in the Journey, whenever they find a Place convenient. The *Baroness* approv'd of it extremely; and thinking

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thinking every Moment an Age till her wicked Designs were brought about, immediately set down to write, while *Du Lache* went to prepare his assisting Villians for the Enterprize they were to undertake.

Enough has been said of the Character of these two Wretches, to make the Reader know they were capable of any Mischief which had a Prospect of Advantage: They readily agreed; and being equipp'd in Habits proper for their Design, took Horse the same Night, promising they would bring back a satisfactory Account of what they had done. An Accident happen'd immediately after, which convinc'd the *Baroness* how necessary what she had contriv'd was to the Conservation of her Fortune: *Du Lache* was under an Arrest on the Account of some Riot he had lately been guilty of; to redeem him from which, there must be a good Sum of Money deposited. She sent to the Banker, in whose Hands lay the best Part of the *Baron's* ready Cash; but he refus'd to pay her any, saying, he had a Letter of Advice to the contrary; and that he would disburse no more till he either saw her Lord, or had Orders from him to do it. This was enough to let her know the Power she once had over him was at an End; and that if he liv'd to return, she must expect another sort of Treatment than she had been accus'tom'd, or could endure to receive. Money, however, must be rais'd; her Instrument must not remain in Confinement; but having now no Credit, even with a Lover, she procur'd some on her Jewels, and releas'd him without giving herself much Trouble about the Matter, believing she should soon be in a Condition to redeem them, having a Will by her, which the *Baron*, in the Time of his too-abundant Fondness, had made, wherein she was left sole Executrix, and full Mistress of every Thing he had in the World. This she design'd to produce as soon as she wish'd for News of his Death should arrive, to the Disappointment of all his Relations, who were utterly ignorant of his having been guilty of so much Injustice.

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justice. Some Debts also, which the Extravagance of this Fellow had contracted, now threat'ning to come upon him, and the Impossibility there was at present for the *Baroness* to discharge them, oblig'd him, as soon as he was releas'd from his Confinement, to take shelter in her House, till the happy Hour was come in which they were to have all Things in their Power.

It was in this Time of his absconding, that Monsieur *Beauclair* was in search of him every where, but in the Place in which he really was; but tho' it was highly probable he might have been heard of at the *Baroness's*, yet so great was his Aversion to that House, that he cou'd not think of going to it on any Account whatsoever; and to send any other Person to make an Enquiry, he knew wou'd be in vain, since he was told the Reasons of his concealing himself. But notwithstanding the Impossibility he found there was of coming to any Knowledge of the Truth thro' his Means, he was inform'd of enough to make him but too sensible for his Repose, that he had been betray'd into a wrong Belief: He sometimes visited *Madamoiselle Sansfoy*; and that Lady, who had not the Gift of concealing any Thing she knew, soon made him acquainted that it was only from *Du Lache* she had been told any Thing to the Disadvantage of *Montamour's* Reputation; and that as to the Story of *Galliard*, she was now fully convinc'd it was entirely false. The Pangs which at this Discourse seiz'd the Soul of the too-late repenting *Beauclair* were such, as were very near driving him to Distraction: The Reflection how by the *worst* of Women, and her cursed Agents, he had been led to injure the *best*; one who lov'd him; one for whose sake, while he believ'd her true, he wou'd have forgone all that this World calls dear, was so dreadful a Shock to his Honour, good Nature, every generous Principle of Humanity, that all the Strength of Reason and Discretion he was Master of, cou'd hardly enable him to sustain: Cou'd his whole Fortune, nay, his very Life,

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Life, have called back Time, and cancell'd the Actions of a few past Months, how gladly wou'd he have resign'd it? But such a Wish was both ridiculous and vain; nor cou'd he hope the sincere Remorse and Grief he felt for what he had done, cou'd expiate his Guilt: The Person he had injur'd was insensible of his Repentance; she was ignorant how much he suffer'd in a Self-Conviction; or if by any Means he could acquaint her with it, he cou'd not assure himself she wou'd think it a sufficient Inducement to engage her to forgive. Yet all the Consolation his Sorrows wou'd admit, was to make Tryal of her Goodness: Perhaps, thought he, if I cou'd once more have the Happiness to throw myself beneath her Feet, to confess my Fault, to implore her Pity, she may yet have some Remains of Tendernefs, which my Complaints may waken! Ungrateful as I seem, she still may love me, and nothing is unpardonable to *Love*! With these and the like Suggestions, which the natural Chearfulness of his Temper, and the Experience he had of the Sweetness of her Disposition inspir'd him with, did he repel Despair whenever he found it attempted to assail him: But a true Passion cannot for any long Time content itself with an *Ideal* Bliss: It was not sufficient that he imagin'd a Possibility of being forgiven, of being bless'd as he had been in the Affections of his, now more than ever, adorable and belov'd *Montamour*, without an Assurance that he was so; and tho' Hope is the best Cordial to preserve Desire, those who sit down with that, and delay the Prosecution of a farther Satisfaction, are like those who build Castles in the Air, pleasing themselves with an imaginary Happiness, which, whenever they gather Courage enough to endeavour to lay hold on, flies from the Embrace, and cheats the vain Attempter, *Beauclair* was for no such unsubstantial Blessings; the Comfort he found in entertaining an Opinion that he might one Day be happy, hinder'd him not from an Impatience to be so.

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Love, ever fertile in Invention, and aiding to the Wishes of a zealous Votary, soon furnish'd him with a Stratagem, which promis'd him Success, at least so far as to give him once more an Opportunity of seeing and speaking to *Montamour*. He was acquainted with a Friar of the Order of *St. Dominic*, one who was not the most strict of his Profession; one who had himself experienc'd the Force of Love, and knew how to commiserate the Woes it very often was the Cause of. To him did the restless *Beauclair* apply for Relief: He made no Secret of the whole History of his Passion, and the Delusions he had been ensnar'd by, and entreated his Assistance in the Design he had form'd. He so far prevail'd on him, as to engage him to procure a Friar's Habit for him; and got his Instructions in what Manner to behave, that he might pass for such to the Abbess of the Monastery where *Montamour* had enter'd herself. Every Thing being ready, he soon set out for the Land of Love, not greatly despairing but that at his Arrival he shou'd find himself not an unwelcome Guest.

He follow'd so exactly the Directions which had been given him by the good-natur'd Friar, that whoever had seen him in that Garb, wou'd have suspected him for no other than what he seem'd.

Being come to the Monastery, the Sanctity of his Appearance gave him an easy Admittance; and telling the Abbess that he had taken that Journey at the Entreaty of the Brother of *Montamour*, who had inform'd him, that he was under an Apprehension that there was more of *Pique* than true *Devotion* in her abandoning the World, and desir'd him to discourse her on that Affair: When he told me this, said the Counterfeit Venerable, I thought the Duty of my Function oblig'd me to search into the Truth, and use the best of my Endeavours to prepare her, if she is not so already, for the Happiness which a religious Life affords. With this, and some other Expressions of the same Nature, the Reverend Matron was wholly won to his Purpose: She left him alone, while she went

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to acquaint *Montamour* of his being there, and the Reasons which had brought him. But when she return'd leading her in, and had presented her to him, how impossible would it be to set forth the Confusion he was in? The sudden Rush of painful Extasy! the darting, throbbing, tingling Mixture of Delight and Terror, which every Vein confess'd, and shook the alarm'd Heart with almost mortal Tremblings! Not all the natural Boldness of his Sex, not all that Presence of Mind which us'd to be his inseparable Companion, not all the Resolutions he had form'd, not all the Care he had taken to arm himself for this Encounter, were sufficient to defend him, when once the lovely injur'd *Montamour* appear'd! He thought she look'd more fair, more beautiful than ever; and tho' her Eyes had lost nothing of their wonted Sweetness, yet a long Habitude of Melancholy had abated a little of the Gaiety of their Rays, and the Austerity of the Life she was about to embrace had given her a greater Composedness in her Countenance. Conscious of Guilt, and too — too sensible of his own Unworthiness to find Mercy, she seem'd to him such as Imagination figures a destroying Angel, adorn'd in shining Ruin! all gloriously Cruel! and severely Just! It was not in the least owing to his own Conduct, that his Disorders were not visible to the Abbess; but that good Lady, believing that on the Account he came it was improper to have a third Person Witness of what he had to deliver, took her Leave, only telling him, That when their Conference was ended, she shou'd entreat his Company to take Part of what their Cloister afforded. But he neither heard nor had Power to make any Answer to this Compliment; every Sense was absent, and Thought dissolv'd in the vast Hurry of his various Emotions; but when *Montamour*, who little suspected the Reason of the *Friar's* Silence and distant Behaviour, desir'd him to sit down, and was beginning to enquire after her Brother, the Sound of her dear, well-remember'd Voice, the graceful charming
Manner

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Manner in which she express'd herself, and that engaging, undescribable, inimitable Something, which is not to be acquir'd, and which is only to be found in the Air and Mein of those whom *Nature*, and not *Art* embellishes, putting him more stronger in Remembrance of the felicitous Moments her Conversation formerly had bless'd him with, and revolving in an Instant ten thousand little nameless Softnesses, --- the thrilling, melting, rapturous Amusements, --- the Consequences of mutual Passion, --- and comparing the *present* with the *past*, what he endur'd was not to be conceal'd! --- a sudden Burst of wild impetuous Passion broke thro' all Disguise, blaz'd in his Eyes, and shew'd the burning Lover plain! Forgetful of what his cooler Thoughts had form'd, he threw himself on her Bosom, grasping her with a Violence scarce supportable, and fixing close to her's his glowing Lips, had Power no other Way to express the Extasy he now again began to re-enjoy! --- a thousand fond endearing Things crowded at once into his Soul, and press'd for Utterance! --- He wou'd have spoke 'em all, but the tumultuous Meanings were too great, too many, and overthrew each other in the Throng, and all he cou'd bring forth was *Montamour*! --- Angelick *Montamour*! Divine, Adorable *Montamour*! --- This was indeed sufficient to make her sensible who it was she entertain'd; and nothing can be more amazing than that in the Surprise of such an Interview, she acted not the least Extravagance: --- Neither the Shock which the Remembrance of his late ill Usage gave her Pride, vented itself in Fury and Revilings; nor the secret Pleasure, which in spite of her Resentment, her continued Tenderness felt at his Repentance and Return, was discoverable by either Word or Look; but doubtful that she might not retain this Command of her Temper, if she trusted herself to listen to the Charms of his Perswasion, wou'd not put it to the Venture, but getting loose from his Embrace, and giving a sudden Spring to a little Bell which hung in the

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Room, rung it with such a Force, that the *Abbeſs* and ſeveral of the *Nuns* came running in before this diſappointed Lover cou'd ſay or do any Thing to prevent her. What this holy Man (ſaid ſhe, turning to the *Abbeſs*) has to offer, may, perhaps, be very good; but as my Reſolution to become a *Devotée* is fix'd, I think it needleſs to hear any Thing which is deſign'd as an Endeavour to alter it: If my Brother is poſſeſs'd of any Scruples, or wou'd infuſe any into you, of my Unworthineſs of the Profeſſion, he may communicate them by Letters either to you or me; for I am fully determin'd to enter into no Converſation with any Stranger, till my having taken the Orders has put a Stop to all the Arguments which may poſſibly be prepar'd to hinder me. In ſpeaking theſe laſt Words, which ſhe pronounc'd with the moſt reſolute Air, ſhe flew out of the Room, leaving him to make his Excuse as he cou'd to the *Abbeſs*, and thoſe of the Siſterhood who had accompany'd her. The Conſternation they were in at her Behaviour was very favourable to *Beauclair*; for while they were looking on one another, wondering what it ſhould be that had occaſion'd it, he gain'd a little Time for the Recovery of his ſcatter'd Spirits, but not enough to enable him to ſpeak of this Adventure, as a Perſon ſo unconcern'd as that which he represented wou'd have done. The Confuſion, however, and Heſitation of the few Words he ſpoke, were look'd on only as occaſion'd by his Chagrin for the indifferent Reception he had met with; and he left them as full of Trouble for the Diſreſpect they imagin'd had been paid to a Man of his Reverence, as they wou'd have been of Anger had they ſuſpected the Impoſture.

But when he was return'd to the Inn where he had taken up Lodgings for this Affair, how infinitely ſhort of what he felt wou'd all Deſcription be? For ſome Hours he was utterly incapable of Reflection, and its Return ſerv'd but to torture him with redoubled Agonies! All the Horrors, all the Woes that can

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Can be imagined to attend disappointed Passion, work'd up to the most elevated Degree that human Nature can sustain, rag'd in his Soul, and tore him with Variety of Anguish! It was the least of his Vexations that he owed them only to himself; if *Montamour* was incens'd, it was his own ill Conduct was the Cause; and if she never shou'd be brought to a Reconciliation, what but his own Unworthiness cou'd be accused? In fine, he was quite Soul-sick, and mad at the Thoughts of what he had done; and the Forgetfulness he had suffer'd himself to fall into, in losing an Opportunity so hard to be found, of endeavouring once to move her in his Favour. But as impossible as at present it seem'd of getting any Means of seeing or speaking to her again, he cou'd not think of returning to *Paris* thus unsatisfied: Her Year of Probation was now almost expired, --- the fatal Time drew near, in which she was to take an eternal Farewel of the World; and then not all his Tears, his Vows, Entreaties, or Repentance, not even her own Desires, had Power to make him happy. --- Some Contrivance therefore must be form'd, and speedily; and he resolv'd, let the Court be never so desperate, to hazard all for one more Interview. Invention, charg'd with the Commands of Passion, brought forth a numerous Issue of unjointed Projects, --- but abortive all, disown'd by Reason, and unnerv'd for Action: --- To think of entering the Monastery as a *Friar*, tho' by never so different a Pretence from that he lately went on, was ridiculous and vain: He had been detected in that Habit by the Person from whom, till she was a little softened, he found it was most his Interest to be conceal'd; and she being under the same Roof, would afford him slender Consolation, if denied the Privilege of entertaining her. --- Sometimes he was thinking to disguise himself as a Cripple, pretend he had fallen from his Horse, and being unable to travel, implore the Charity and Assistance of the Sisterhood; but the Remembrance that there was a College of

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Jesuites within a Bow-Shot from the Monastery, to which they would probably send him, as a Place more proper and convenient, put an End to that Design. -- Another Stratagem was to dress himself as a Woman, whom some unexpected ill Turn of Fortune had driven from her Parents, and beg an *Asylum* there; but this his Stature forbid. ---- It was a considerable Time before any Thing which seem'd feasible offer'd it self to his Fancy; but what is it that a Lover cannot, at last, get the better of, when Resolution is on his Side? As he was walking one Day by the Walls which encompass'd the *Nunnery* Gardens, he perceiv'd a Piece of it had lately fallen, and was now repairing by the Workmen; he presently bethought him of becoming a Labourer, and by that Means having free Egress and Regress to carry Mortar, Stone, and other Things for the Work, he might easily hide himself among the Bushes, and watch an Opportunity of *Montamour's* coming to walk. This Enterprize was no sooner conceived than put in Execution: His Friar's Vest was now exchanged for a ragged Coat, his Cowl for a Linsey-Woolsey Cap, and his Beads for a Hod: By offering himself for a low Hire, he was immediately entertain'd by the Master. His Business being only to fetch and carry, he was not at all found fault with, but perform'd what he had undertaken with more Diligence than those who had all their Life been accustomed to it; so much more is it for the truly well-bred to descend to the meanest Offices, than for those born to Beggary to bear Prosperity and an Affluence of Fortune superior to their Hopes. Nor did his Toil in the Day make him forgetful of what he had design'd in the Night, but as soon as he saw they were about to leave work, he took his Opportunity to slide down from the Wall, and conceal him in the most remote Part of the Garden. The *first* Night of his Watching he had no other Reward than a distant Sight of *Montamour*, as she was at Prayers among the rest of the *Nuns*; for the Chapel had a Window into the Garden, and
was

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was low enough for him to look in as he stood a Tiptoe. The *second*, indeed, paid his Pains much better: She walked above an Hour close by the Place where he was hid; and tho' he could not speak to her, because there were two of the *Nuns* with her, yet he had the Satisfaction to observe she was extremely pensive, and that all her Companions could do was ineffectual to remove a Melancholy, which he had Leave to hope was influenced by her secret Thoughts of him. But the *third* gave him an Opportunity full as his Soul could wish: It chanc'd to be an extreme fine Evening, and the Fragancy of the Air had drawn a great Number of the young *Devotees* out to refresh themselves: *Montamour* was among them; and he still found she was as thoughtful as before. They pass'd some Hours there; some walking; --- some sitting on the grassy Banks; --- some sporting with the various colour'd Flowers which grew on the Borders, and seem'd to court the Gatherer's Hand; --- some cooling their Fingers in the Fountain, and wantonly throwing the Water on their Companions; every one diverting herself as her innocent and undisturb'd Fancy led her. --- But *Montamour*, whose Mind was more perplexed, and who, in the late Adventure with the lovely *Friar*, had found that Self-denial was the hardest of all Virtues, affected to walk alone: She either not observed, or had no Relish of the little Recreations they enjoy'd, but singling herself from the rest, he saw her strike down an Alley which led to a fine *Grotto* at the lower End of the Garden. The Place he had that very Night fortunately made choice of for his Concealment, was a long narrow Walk of *Camomile*, the End of which came almost to the *Grotto*, and was shelter'd all the Way with a thick Row of Palms: On this he could walk without being in the least heard or seen by any body in the Garden; and as soon as he saw which Way she went, he immediately follow'd. He was at the End of the Walk almost as soon as she was in the *Grotto*; but he durst

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not enter while there was Company so near, fearing the Strength of her Resolution, and the Prejudice she had conceiv'd against him, and which he but too justly had deserv'd, should influence her to treat the *Labourer* in the same Manner as she had done the *Friar*. These Suggestions were, indeed, most consonant to Reason, but they were presently oppos'd by others of a very different Nature: He began to think that if she left the Garden before the others, he might never have so good an Opportunity as now; that there was scarce a Probability he shou'd ever find her entirely alone; and that it was better to hazard her good Nature, if she wou'd suffer him to speak to her now, than run the Risque of not speaking to her at all. While he was thus debating, and irresolute what to do, he heard the Charmer who had occasioned this Conflict in his Soul, tune her Guittare! In Expectation of that Melody he for a while suspended his Cogitation, and heard her sing in a soft, low, but sweet and harmonious Accent these Words, which, 'tis probable, were of her own composing:

I.

*No more, fond Maid, direct thy fruitless Aims
To Bliss thou canst but in Idea know:
A Love so pure as thine Heaven only claims,
Nor will be rival'd by the Toys below.*

II.

*Fly, fly, O fly! the Sense-alluring Bait
Of gay Deceit, in tender Raptures drest!
Remorse and Shame do on Believing wait,
And late Repentance rends th'unwary Breast.*

III.

*From Damon's Air, his Shape, his flowing Wit,
His thousand, thousand Worlds of countless Charms!
Fate weak Defence from Virtue does permit,
Unfurnish'd by Devotion's stronger Arms.*

IV.

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IV.

*Nor can Resentment, or thy Sex's Pride,
For Injuries receiv'd, set free thy Mind;
Before Love's Fire those meaner Flames subside,
And shrink away like Vapours in the Wind.*

V.

*In Piety, alone, a Refuge dwells,
To shield thy Soul from Passion's pleasing Pains,
The base Efforts of faithless Man repels,
And renders their soft Enchantments vain.*

With trembling Limbs and aching Heart the repenting *Beauclair* heard her sing those Lines, which gave him so much Cause to fear all his Endeavours to bring her to a Reconciliation would be in vain. What hope to conquer, when with Heaven we contend! Yet, tho' despairing, he would not thus give over, and was moving softly towards the *Grotto*, resolving, let the Consequence be what it would, to know his Doom at once, and end the Tortures of Suspence: But, as he was just at the Entrance, the late ceas'd Harmony of her melodious Voice began a-new to charm his listening Ears, and oblig'd him to delay the Prosecution of his Design, that he might not lose the Pleasure of hearing her sing; which she immediately did these Stanzas:

E.

*The Heart that once has Power to change,
And with a second Passion burn,
Tho' to the first it would return,
Will ever be inclin'd to range.*

L. 5

M.

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II.

*Then charming faithless Swain give o'er;
Nor think by Prayers or Sighs to move;
A Rebel once to me, and love,
I may forgive, but trust no more.*

III.

*No more will I deluded be,
Tho' with secret Wishes lying,
All dissolving, melting, dying,
To Death I'll yield, but not to thee.*

Tho' the Musick to which these Words were set gave them a Air infinitely more gay than the former, yet she could not conclude them without a Mixture of Sighs; which occasioning a Hesitation in her Speech, made a perceivable Variation in the Tune, and seem'd to mitigate their rigid Meaning: The Sense, indeed, was cruel, but the Manner of Pronunciation was such, as renewed in the attentive List'ner some of those Hopes with which he had formerly been enliven'd. The Gardens were, by this Time, wholly free from Company, no Interruption near, every Thing favour'd his Design, and now he thought he boldly might advance; but still the Terrors occasion'd by a Consciousness of his Unworthiness, and ever the Companions of Guilt, made him enter the *Grotto*, but with Tremblings, and kept him for some Moments at an awful Distance. She was fallen into so deep a *Refuerie*, that she discern'd not that any Person was near, tho' the Moon, which was then at the Heighth, glitter'd thro' the Trees, and shone directly on him. Gladly would he have indulg'd Contemplation, and fed Reflection with gazing on her Beauties, while thus unseen, and uncontroul'd by the Severity of her Glances; but the Remembrance how he had been disappointed by,

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by his late giving a Loose to the Ardours of his Passion, made him resolve to proceed with Art and Circumspection: He moved with gently-treading Steps to the Bank on which she sat, and was close by her before she in the least perceiv'd him; but when, lifting up her Eyes, she saw a Man, and felt his Touch, (for he had seiz'd fast hold of her to prevent her stirring,) she sent forth a great Shriek, loud enough to have alarm'd the *Convent*, had they had any Notion that any belonging to it was abroad: But, to hinder her from repeating it, and unwilling to suffer her to continue longer in the Fright she was in, he threw himself on his Knees, and bathing the Hand he grasp'd with a Stream of Tears, Hold, Madam, hold, said he, this is not the Posture of a Ruffian: --- I come not to alarm your Breast with Fears, but to move Pity there: --- 'Tis Pity only, the adoring *Beauclair* ask; and that is what, indeed, his Miseries may claim. *Beauclair*! said she, surpris'd beyond Expression, but perhaps not altogether so much displeas'd as afterwards she feign'd to be. Yes, Madam, resum'd he, the despairing, dying, but still adoring *Beauclair* entreats you but to hear what vast Appearances of Reason urg'd him to seem so careless of his Happiness, and rashly trespass against Heaven and you; --- and, if you *hear*, you will, I hope, *forgive*. --- By what has already been said of the Passion of *Montamour*, the Reader may be better able to judge the Conflict she endur'd, than I am to describe it; but resolving to keep up her Resentment, and give no room for him to imagine there was a Possibility of renewing in her again those soft Emotions he once had the Power of inspiring her with; I am sorry, Monsieur, answer'd she, (with an Accent which had nothing in it of Tendernefs) that you should have given your self a Trouble wholly unnecessary: Where there's no Wrong there needs no Justification; --- I have profited too much by your Change of Humour, to be offended at it: --- Those Vows which your Inconstancy releas'd me from, will soon be paid to a sublimer Object: What

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What you despis'd, Heaven will, I hope, accept; and by your Ingratitude I arrive at the only perfect Happiness here: How ought I then to bless the early Knowledge of your wavering Nature?--- to thank you for your quick-discover'd Baseness, that I in time might fly, and scorn your faithless Sex? It was not so much the Words, as the Manner in which they were spoke, which seiz'd the Soul of him they were address'd to with Horrors he had never known before: Not the past torturing Pangs of her imagin'd Falshood, nor the ensuing Terrors of Remorse for his own Guilt, were half so dreadful as the *present* Racks. Amidst the doubtful Gloom some intermingling Beams of Hope had still dawn'd o'er his Wishes, cheering Expectance with Promises of a future Day: But all was Darkness now!-- all black Despair! The fix'd Coldness, the unmov'd Constancy which every Word and Look, and the whole Air of *Montamour* denoted, now made him but too sure she was inevitably lost!-- Nor did the Remembrance of the Fault he had been guilty of, permit him even the poor Comfort of complaining of her Severity! A while he gaz'd upon her with such inward tumultuous Emotions, as depriv'd him of the Power of Speech, till perceiving she was about to go out of the *Grotto*, and leave him in the same Manner she had done before, he threw himself on his Knees, by Force retaining her, till he had recover'd himself enough to endeavour to persuade. All that the tenderest Love, the fiercest Wishes, the most bleeding burning Passion, made desperate and raging, can inflict, was to the Life demonstrated in all his Words and Actions: His trembling Limbs, his wild distracted Looks, his faltering Speech, his unconnected Expressions, display'd the Deity in his full genuine Force; unshadow'd, undisguis'd with any of those pageant Arts of pompous Eloquence, which oft adorn a counterfeit'd Flame, but are forgot and lost amidst the Ardours of a true Affection. Oh! would the unwary Fair, when thus address'd, but give

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give her Reason scope to judge, how easily might she judge the real *Lover*, from the flattering *Courtier*; admire the *Wis*, but scorn the *affected Passion* of him, who comes but to seduce and ruin her. But, indeed, there are so few of either Sex sincerely touch'd with a noble and generous Desire, that 'tis no Wonder they mistake it in another: Deceit meets with Deceit, and both are unconcern'd alike.

But *Montamour* was vastly different, as was her *Beauclair*, from those fashionable Enamorato's: With Truth, with Tenderness, with Zeal she lov'd; and tho' she had all the Reason in the World for keeping up her Resentment, and had Strength enough of Resolution to restrain the Fondness of her Passion from shewing it self to one who had so greatly injur'd her, and whose Repentance she thought too small a Recompence; yet did her Soul pity the Agonies she, by her own, was too --- too sensible were unfeign'd, and must her self of Consequence suffer far greater. Passions of all kinds find Ease in the Discovery; but smother'd Anguish preys on the very Vitals; the stifled Sighs recoil on the tormented Heart, and crack the Strings of Life: Yet persisting in her Coldness, and resolving rather to die than recede from that Indifference she had vow'd to wear for ever in her Behaviour to him, all that his Tears, Entreaties, agonizing Groans could move her to, was to sit down, and listen to all he had to say in Vindication of his late Proceedings; which was, to relate, in as brief a Manner as he could, the Delusion of *Du Lache*, and the Artifices by which he had been brought to a Belief of her Inconstancy. He kept back nothing of the Truth, but that which Honour forbade him to reveal, the Favours he had receiv'd from the Baronefs. But *Montamour*, who was no Stranger to that Part of the Story, having patiently heard the rest, and perceiving he had done, would not omit this Opportunity of letting him know, not the most secret Transactions of his Guilt had been hid from her. You do well, Monsieur, said she, to make a Repetition

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tion of every Thing which may seem to excuse the ill Treatment you have given me, artfully concealing, while you relate the Accusations laid on me, the Charms of my Rival, without which all the Suggestions of a Villain, like *Du Lache*, had been ineffectual. O too severely judg'd! interrupted the Soul-tortur'd *Beauclair*: Be Witness for me Heaven, and send down instant Punishments on my devoted Head, if I swerve in the least Tittle from the Truth! --- if e'er my Soul conceiv'd one tender Thought, once form'd a Wish, or knew one soft Desire, which center'd not in *Montamour*! --- if still she was not, even at the Time when most I fear'd she scorn'd me, the only dearest Object of my Thoughts by Day, and Dreams by Night! --- if even her Anger, killing as it is, wears not more Charms to me, than all the endearing Smiles of her whole Sex besides! --- if in this dreadful Moment, this cruel Now, when all my Tears, my Prayers, my Sorrow and Repentance, my inward Agonies, the speechless Torments of my poor rending, bleeding, breaking Heart, cannot obtain one pitying Glance, one kind commiserating Word, she be not dearer to me than Life, and all the gay Delights this World can give! --- and if it be not greater Pleasure here to expire before her, than live whole Ages in a Queen's Embraces, may all the Curses due to Perfidy fall heavy on me! He would have proceeded, but she prevented him: Hold, said she, forbear these Imprecations: I believe you once did love me, nay, I am of Opinion you have resum'd that Tenderness you had for a Time thrown off; but (continu'd she, with a Smile which had in it more of Disdain than Satisfaction) while you imagin'd me false, it was but reasonable you should seek some Consolation; and where so probable to find it as in the Arms of a Woman so every way qualified, and so desirous to please, as the Baroness *de Tortillée*? The disorder'd Lover hung down his Head, utterly unable to make any Reply to these cutting Words: He was too open and sincere in his Nature, to be guilty of denying that

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it was really his Desire of forgetting *Montamour*, which had induc'd him to visit the Baroness; and to confess it, he thought, would be an Aggravation of his Crime. At last, O Madam! resum'd he, the Opinion I was ensnar'd into of your Unkindness drove me mad, I knew not what I did:—But of this one Thing I am sure, and of that alone, that I have never ceas'd to love you;—and whatever Appearances may be against me, my Heart could never be but yours! Notwithstanding all that prodigious Presence of Mind which *Montamour* was Mistress of, and the Resentment with which she had arm'd her self, as soon as she saw *Beauclair* was near her, she began to find it now impossible much longer to preserve it in his Presence; and looking on the secret Pleasure which, in spite of her Indignation, she felt in entertaining him, as a Sin to Prudence, and the Resolution she had made of forgetting him, muster'd up all the Remains of Anger in her Heart, to inspire her with all Means of banishing him for ever; and taking the Advantage of his last Words, One would, indeed, (said she, with a Voice full of Austerity) believe that you knew not what you did, or sure he who has so publickly avow'd himself the Lover of the Baroness *de Tortillée*, would never after that imagine his Pretensions were capable of creating in *Montamour* any other Passion than Disdain and Hatred:— I should have an Aversion to my self, (added she, after a little Pause,) if I could think any Action of mine has ever given you leave to judge so meanly of me, as to make you hope there could be an Atonement for Injuries like those you've offer'd me:— No, *Beauclair*, no; I am not twice to be deceiv'd!— Nor, had I the most undeniable Assurances that you lov'd even more than you would persuade me that you do, nay, were I weak enough to feel for your Return of Passion the same soft Emotions which heav'd my credulous Heart when first I listen'd to your Vows, not to preserve *your* Life,--- my *own*,--- or the eternal Peace of both, would I forgive, or e'er consent

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to see you more. As soon as she had done speaking; she turn'd away, resolving to give him no farther Opportunity of Conversation; and it was but for a very few Moments that he had Power either by Perswasion or Force to detain her; for perceiving his Despair made him have recourse to the latter, she started from his Arms with an uncounterfeited Fury, vowing that if he presum'd to hold, or follow her, she would alarm the Convent with her Cries, and expose him to all the Punishments of the Ecclesiastick Justice. This last Threat would have avail'd but little, if the Fierceness of the fair Menacer had not disarm'd him of all that Boldness, which is in some Cases a necessary Qualification to make a Lover Master of his Wishes. He had not Courage to offend her more: --- All that Vivacity of Thought, --- that Energy of Soul, which despises Opposition, and triumphs over the most strict Reservedness of the denying Charmer, was now utterly extinguish'd in him: --- He suffer'd her to depart; --- he saw her go; --- and while his straining Eyes pursu'd her till the exclusive Walls depriv'd him of that Blessing, his enervate Limbs refus'd to bear him after her! --- Senseless and motionless he stood! --- chill Horror invaded every Faculty, and even Desire was froze! Had he regarded her with less Purity and Respect, he had perhaps succeeded better; but *Love* has ever this Incongruity in its Effects, That the more violent it is, the less it is capable of serving it self.

It must be a Pen infinitely more capable of Description than mine, which could represent the true State of his Condition: When left alone, all that Despair, and Rage, and Grief, heighten'd by a Consciousness of Guilt, and justly meriting every Thing he suffer'd, could inflict, was his. He thought it now altogether vain, ever to attempt her more; he gave himself up wholly to Distraction, and Life or Death were become Things indifferent to him. --- The Morning found him in this wretched Circumstance: --- The Sun, whose chearing Beams drive all the Mists
and

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and Vapours far away, dispell'd not his; odious and hateful to himself, he curs'd the Day, and wish'd eternal Darkness. — In this wild Hurry of confus'd Emotions, he neither consider'd where he was, nor the Danger of being discover'd to have been there all Night: He attempted not to escape, nor so much as once thought of it; and instead of concealing himself among the Bushes, till the Workmen coming might give him an Opportunity of mingling with them, as twice before he had done, he now lay flat on his Face in an open Alley of the Garden, where he was not only visible to his Fellow-Labourers, but also would have been so to the whole Convent, if by chance any of them had look'd thro' the Windows. It must certainly have been pleasant enough to have seen (tho' the Repetition would afford but little Matter of Diversion) the Astonishment and various Conjectures these Fellows put on their finding him in that Place and Posture: Some would have it that he was a Thief, and had lain there with an Intent to rob the Monastery; others, that having been guilty of some notorious Crime, he had been order'd to run so great a Danger by way of Penance; but the most good-natur'd among them, observing the Disorder of his Looks and Words, (for he was little prepar'd for Excuses,) imagin'd he had been seiz'd with a sudden Fit of the falling Sickness, or Apoplexy. The Master himself was of this Opinion; and happening to be of a Disposition less inclining to create Disturbances than the Generality of his Station, who are for the most part greatly delighted with Noise and Confusion of what kind soever, contented himself with discharging him from his Service, without giving any Notice of what had happen'd to the *Abbeſs*, or any of the *Nuns*. One Thing in this Passage I cannot let slip without observing; which is, That among the many different Conjectures which had been form'd on the Discovery that a Man had dared to conceal himself all Night in that forbidden Ground, there was not one who imputed it to the true

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true Cause; which proves how little People of such low Capacities are able to entertain any just Notions of that tender Passion; and how impossible it is for any but a Lover to conceive the Force of Love, and to what Lengths it will transport the Votary inspir'd with an unfeign'd Ardour. But setting aside Reflections, which the sensible Reader need not to be put in mind of, tho' our unfortunate Lover came off much better from this Adventure than he could have expected, had he consider'd it all, yet the losing his Employ was the utter Loss of all Opportunity ever to try his Fortune there again, if it had been possible for him to have recover'd Courage sufficient to attempt it. He was now oblig'd to leave her to the Performance of her Vow; but with what a Tempest of Mind, and how accompany'd, he return'd to *Paris*, those only who have ever been acquainted with the Furies of Despair, Remorse, and a too-late Repentance, can imagine.

While Affairs were in this melancholy Position between the Lovers, those who had been the Occasion of their Misfortunes were in a Condition much worse, though infinitely less deserving Compassion. The Hour was now come in which the wicked Baroness and her Instruments of Mischief were to prove, that Crimes, like theirs, howe'er triumphant for a while, will not always escape the Cognizance of avenging Heaven. One Evening as she was sitting in her Closet, accompany'd only by *Du Lache*, who, for the Reasons before-mention'd, was still in her House, they heard a loud knocking at the Gate, and immediately after, the Noise of several Persons coming hastily up Stairs: The impatient Expectation they both were in for the Return of *Toncar* and *Le Songe*, made them presently believe it was they, whose Haste to report the joyful Tidings they had brought, had made them stand on so little Ceremony: But what was their Astonishment and Horror, when *Harriot*, who knew pretty well her Lady's Disposition, tho' perhaps not let into the Depth of her Designs,

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signs, came running into the Room breathless and frightened out of her Wits, crying, O Madam, my Lord! --- She had Time for no more: The *Baron*, follow'd by several Gentlemen, was close behind her, imagining by her Hurry his Wife might be there, and, probably, not without a Thought he shou'd find some with her whom his Presence wou'd alarm. But he was deceiv'd in this last Conjecture; for *Du Lache*, on the first Appearance of *Harriot*, the Terror he saw in her Countenance, and the Words she spoke, was apprehensive of the Truth, concluded himself betray'd, tho' he had no Leisure to reflect by what Means; and agitated at once with Guilt, and Shame, and Fear, the Villain's Curse, he flew backward to the Protection of a Screen which happen'd to be there, behind which there was a Door that open'd to a little Gallery, whence, in the present Confusion, he easily escap'd without being seen, at least by any who wou'd offer to detain him. But not the prodigious Surprise the Baroness must be in at seeing before her the Person she believ'd had been destroy'd; not all the Terrors which seiz'd her guilty Soul at the Sight of him she had so highly injur'd, and in whose Eyes she read her Doom, had Power to deprive her of that Artifice which had so often secured her from Discovery, and might even now have stood her Friend, had the Proofs against her been such as wou'd have admitted of the smallest Scruple: With Tears of Joy she seem'd to welcome her long absent Husband; --- she flew into his Arms, hung on his Neck, and fainted on his Breast with an admirably well-acted Transport of extravagant Affection; --- with such strenuous Embraces did she press him, that it was as much as he could do to disengage himself; but when he had, Spare yourself, Madam, said he, turning his Head from her, spare *yourself* the Pains, and *me* the Shock of remembering there can be such monstrous Dissimulation in the World! --- You see I have escap'd the Daggers you employ'd against me; and you might, methinks

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methinks, imagine I now know too much to be subjected to your Arts as heretofore. What means my Lord? interrupted she: I employ Daggers! O Heaven! what *Fiend* hast thou permitted to accuse me, and turn the once-fond Heart of my dear Lord to such unheard, unthought of Cruelty? --- 'Tis all, --- 'tis all in vain, resumed the disordered *Baron*; and 'twould become you better of the two to avow your Hate, and say I was unworthy of your Bed, than poorly thus to counterfeit a Tenderness, and deny a Guilt which all these here (continued he, pointing to the Gentlemen who were with him) know as well as I: --- But to leave you no Shadow of an Excuse, I will inform you that it is by your own Emissaries you are betrayed; --- and when I repeat the Names of *Toncarr* and *Le Songe*, those design'd Murderers, --- those pretended Servants, sent by yourself, and recommended by you, Shame, sure, will stop your Mouth! The Amazement she put on at these Words, and the Asseverations she made use of, that she was entirely ignorant of what he meant, and that she knew those Men he mentioned for no other than what she sent them for, honest and diligent Attendants, was to no purpose to make her appear less vile; and the Disturbance of Soul which the *Baron* was in, damping the Power of expressing himself in as clear Terms as he would have done, one of his Friends, took upon him to address the Lady in this Manner; Madam, said he, I fear all that you can say, or do, will be ineffectual to wipe off the Odium of an Accusation, which so many Circumstances concur to make appear but too just: --- The unhappy *Delirium*, which this much-wrong'd Gentleman long labour'd under, is evident, from the Manner in which he was seiz'd; the Testimony of the Physician who restored him, and several others of the Learned that have been consulted in it, that it proceeded from something that had been given him, and not from any natural Disorder; --- then your Behaviour, while he languish'd under that Misfortune, has been, I'm sorry to say it, so contrary to what
that

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that of a Wife shou'd be, that it gives foul Suspicions 'twas by your Means he swallow'd the Occasion of his Distemper: -- But for this last, this yet more monstrous Contrivance, to murder him, both *Toncarr* and *Le Songe* have confess'd it was from the *Baroness* they were to receive that vast Reward *Du Lache* had promis'd them. 'Tis impossible to represent the Rage she flew into at these Words, or the Imprecations she made that every Article of this Accusation was false; but the *Baron*, now, too well convinc'd, growing impatient at her Obstinacy, wou'd not suffer her to speak much; and the Gentleman who had began to discourse her on this Occasion, resum'd it in these or the like Words: Where Proofs are plain, said he, Denial but adds to the Crime, and justly aggravates the Person injur'd. Your Case wou'd be infinitely more worthy Commiseration, if touch'd with a due Sense of the Wrongs you have done the best of Husbands, you freely did acknowledge it, and in that Acknowledgment make known for whose sake, and by whose Artifices, you had been ensnared to forget all the Ties of Virtue, Honour, and Gratitude, that we might take Revenge on the Deceiver, such as his generous Heart, which burns with unextinguishable Love, can ne'er inflict on you. The *Baroness* was not more distracted at what she had seen and heard, than perplex'd by what Means it came about that her Designs were discover'd; she cou'd not think that either *Toncarr* or *Le Songe*, staunch and experienc'd Villains, shou'd, all of a sudden, feel Remorse, much less believe that they shou'd, from any imagin'd Interest to themselves, betray her, since from obliging *her*, a thousand Advantages were likely to accrue, which Men of their Principles cou'd never hope for from the *Baron's* Virtue; and being desirous to know the Certainty, -- Oh! 'tis I alone am wrong'd! said she: Those Wretches have been set on by some secret Enemy of the *Baron's*, whom to screen from Justice, they throw the black Asperision of his Crimes on me! ---- Unhappy
guiltless

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guiltless me! No, Madam, answer'd he, they were but too faithful to the Trust repos'd in them: --- Your noble Husband escap'd the horrid Assassination by an Accident almost miraculous, in which, thank Heaven, 'twas my good Fortune to be instrumental. Chancing to ride that Way, I saw those Wretches with detested Hands about to plunge their cruel Swords in his defenceless Breast, I rush'd between, with timely Aid preserv'd him from their Treachery, and with the Assistance of my Servants, bound and pinn'd them, having first, by Threats of instant Death, extorted from their Mouths an Account of what they were, and how encourag'd to this vile Attempt. --- They now are in *Paris*, in Custody of the Officers of Justice, in whose Presence they have been oblig'd to make Oath of what before they had declared: --- They still stick firm to what they alledg'd at first; and I lament there is no room to hope my Friend is less unhappy than he thinks himself in his fair Wife's Unkindness. All the Courage which this unexpected Turn of Fortune had left the *Baroness*, forsook her at these Words: She cou'd not be assur'd she was convicted, without being as certain she shou'd meet with the Punishment which her Crime deserv'd: All her Policy forsook her; she no longer had the Power of dissembling; nor durst lift up her Eyes to him she knew wrong'd beyond a Possibility of Forgiveness. --- Streams of unfeigned Tears now trickled down her Cheeks; --- real Sighs heav'd her disorder'd Breast; and if she felt not a true *Repentance* for her Guilt, she did a severe *Regret* for the Condition it had reduc'd her to. The *Baron*, fully acquainted with her Unworthiness, and sensible of his own too great good Nature, dared not trust himself to look upon her long, lest his relenting Heart should pardon all, and be again deluded; but turning to the Gentlemen who had accompany'd him, Come worthy Friends, said he, we trifle time with this ungrateful Woman; it yet remains to bring to Justice the chief Agent of her Crimes: --- For her, if Conscience, by repeated Crimes

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Crimes, be not quite lost, and stifled in her Soul, 'twill find a Voice to speak, and to upbraid, open the monstrous Legend of her Actions, and with the black *Remora's* drive her mad. He went out of the Chamber with these Words, which were the last she ever heard him speak; for tho' when she had a little recover'd herself, she sent a thousand Times to beg a Moment's Audience, he never cou'd be prevail'd upon to grant it, or to see her more.

After they had left her, *Du Lache* was sought thro' every Room in the House; for the *Baron* was presently inform'd by some of the Servants, that he had been there conceal'd. But that Villain was, by this Time, past their Reach; and tho' there was all imaginable Diligence made use of to discover where he was, yet many Days pass'd over without being able to give the least Account of him. By this Means the Tryals of *Le Songe* and *Toncarr* were delay'd, the *Baron* thinking it necessary to have both the Accusers impeach'd Face to Face. --- They were kept in close Prison however, and the *Baroness* confined to her Chamber, without so much as *Harriot*, or any Servant she had ever seen before, to attend her.

If in the *Baron's* Soul there was the least Spark of Tenderness remaining for his perfidious Wife, he soon met with what was sufficient to extinguish it, when looking over the Accounts of his Estate, and seeing under her own Hand to his Banker and Steward the exorbitant Demands she had made on them, he found that in three Years, the Term of their being together, she had consum'd more ready Money (for he was immensely rich) than wou'd have supported the Retinue of the first Prince of the Blood for twice as long: Bills, also, for Debts she had contracted, were hourly brought him for Expences of so superfluous and luxurious a sort, that his *Amazement* at an Extravagance so unbounded, so unexampled, was almost equal to his *Chagrin* at being oblig'd to discharge them. Besides, as it is the Way of the World

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to expose in their worst Colours the Vices of a Person in Disgrace, his Ears were continually teiz'd with some new Account of her ill Conduct; and tho' it was scarce possible to report her more vile than she really was, 'tis certain there was nothing of the Truth omitted.

The dejected *Beauclair* was, perhaps, the only Person in Town whom this Adventure had not reach'd; his Soul was too much taken up in the Contemplation of his own Misfortunes to listen to those of another. As soon as he return'd to *Paris*, and had got to his Lodgings, he threw himself into Bed, from which none of his Servants (who were entirely ignorant what it was that disorder'd him, or where he had been) cou'd prevail on him to rise, or to admit the Visits of any of his Acquaintance. A young *Chevalier* coming to lodge in the same House, express'd a prodigious Concern when he was told his Neighbour's melancholy Condition: He sent to entreat the Liberty of visiting him; but was refus'd; till one Day, happening to see a Servant going in with something his Master wanted, he took that Opportunity (which probably he had watch'd for) to beg that Favour himself. It was not in the Power of any Misfortune to make *Beauclair* forget that Gentleman-like Complaisant Behaviour which render'd his Conversation as charming to the *Women*, as the Soundness of his Judgment, and almost an universal Knowledge of every beneficial Study, made it esteem'd and coveted by the *Men*, and could not avoid doing the Civility of his Chamber, when one, who appear'd so much a Gentleman, desir'd to be admitted. Beside, there was something so engaging in the Air and Mein of this young *Chevalier*, which, whether he would, or no, attracted his Admiration: He grew immediately charm'd with him without knowing that he was so; and began to find a Pleasure in conversing with him; such as had been a Stranger to his Soul, since his breaking off with *Montamour*. He fancy'd, indeed, he found something

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thing in his Features, and the Accent of his Voice, so much resembling that Lady's, that had it seem'd possible, he shou'd have believ'd it her: But that was a vain and soon-rejected Thought! — She was far off, — shut up within a Monastery: — Tho' had she been near, and at Liberty, there was little Likelihood that she, who wou'd not by all his Entreaties be won to grant him one Moment's willing Audience, when he had risqu'd such imminent Dangers to obtain it, shou'd come, of her own Accord, to seek him, at his own Lodgings, and in a Garb so much unsuitable to her Nicety and Reserve. Besides, the *Chevalier* had darker Hair, a far less delicate Complexion, and a certain Boldness in his Look, becoming enough in one of his Sex, but vastly different from that modest Mildness he had always seen in her's. The bare Imagination, however, that there was a Likeness, tho' never so small a one, was sufficient to make him valuable: He was so far from being chagrin'd at the Intrusion, that he became a Petitioner for the same Favour the next Day; and the other was too well satisfied in entertaining him, not to comply with his Request: There soon grew an Intimacy between them, which seem'd rather the Consequence of many *Years* Acquaintance, than a few *Days*. 'Tis very difficult for the Tongue to forbear speaking something of what the Soul is full of: The despairing *Beauclair*, wholly taken up with his Passion, cou'd not sit so many Hours with his new Friend without revealing the whole History of it to him: — He let him into every Particular of his Transgression, and Repentance for it; complain'd of the uncommon Severity of *Montamour*, and entreated his Advice. Nor was he, while making this Recital, agitated with more violent Emotions than the Hearer of it appear'd to be: The young *Vraymont* (for so he call'd himself) discover'd he had a Heart tender and susceptible of Love's soft Impression: He cou'd not listen to some Passages, and restrain his Tears, nor suffer a Sigh from *Beauclair* to pass unanswered'd

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answer'd by one of his own: But when he found he was beginning to accuse the Cruelty and unforgiving Temper of his Mistress, he cou'd not forbear taking her Part: Ah, Monsieur *Beauclair* ! said he, in spite of the Pity due to what I see you suffer, and the Inclination I have to be of your Side, Justice now obliges me to engage in the Defence of one I know not, against him whose Friendship I profess an Ambition to become worthy of: I cannot think the Proceedings of that Lady are in the least to be condemn'd: Had she acted otherwise, you might indeed have applauded the Effects of a Passion which made you Master of your Wishes; but what must the disinterested Part of the World have thought of her Behaviour? Wou'd not the Meanness of her Spirit, and her easy Fondness, have been the Subject of Ridicule? By what yourself has said, I find she loves you,---loves you with a Tenderness, at least, equal to your own;---and, doubtless, when she pronounc'd the Sentence of your eternal Banishment, felt Torments greater than she gave:--- But, there are some Sorts of Injuries which Honour cannot pardon; among which, I think those are she has receiv'd from you. Yet Heaven, cry'd the half-distracted *Beauclair*, forgives the *penitent* Offender. Yes, resum'd the other; but *here* the Case is widely different: The heavenly Mercy is accountable to nothing but itself; but we poor Mortals, whose Actions are censur'd by each other, and scarce the best can 'scape Reflection, must be cautious, ever watchful how we tread that slippery Road, the World's Opinion; for Reputation is so nice a Thing, so finely wrought, so liable to break, the least false Step disjoins the beauteous Frame, and down we sink in endless Infamy.--- Consider, added he, the Reasons why Women are, by our *Salique* Law, debarr'd from reigning? Why, in all Nations of the Earth, excluded from publick Management? Us'd but as Toys? Little immaterial Amusements, to trifle away an Hour of idle Time with? Is it not because their Levity of Nature, their
weak

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weak Irresolution, pleas'd and displeas'd oft at they know not what, and always in Extreame, makes them unfit for Counsel, for Secrecy, or Action? --- If one among them can tow'r above the Follies of her Sex, and awe her encroaching Passions with superior Reason, we should admire a Virtue so uncommon. --- And tho' the Freedom of my Speech, should lose me the Honour of your Friendship, the Love I bear to Truth obliges me to say, that, in my Opinion, had *Montamour* granted to your Inconstancy that kind Reward its contrary had merited, she had proved the *Lover*, but not the Woman of *Discretion*, and had been guilty of an Injustice to herself, which I know not how she wou'd have been able to account for. This Manner of arguing wou'd not, perhaps, have been very agreeable to Monsieur *Beauclair*, had it come from any other Mouth; but nothing was unpardonable from this young Favourite: He had already gain'd so great an Ascendant over him, that it was in his Power to perswade him almost to any Thing: Hurry'd by the Violence of his Despair, he had certainly had recourse to some desperate Remedy, to ease the present Anguish, had not the other's prudent Advice and philosophical Reasonings (which seem'd far above his Age) interposed to stay him: Whenever he found him more than ordinarily sad, he wou'd endeavour to divert his Griefs, or when he found him (as sometimes he did) transported with Excess of Passion, and appearing like one totally depriv'd of Reason, he wou'd for a while give way to the Tempest of his Despair, then gently parley with the Fury, till by Degrees he sooth'd it to a Calm. --- Never Man, overwhelm'd like him in Sorrows, met a Comforter so kind, so industrious, and so artful in allaying them; he look'd on him as his Guardian-Angel, sent down from Heaven to soften his impetuous Passions, and restore his Peace. It was seldom they were asunder, but whenever it happen'd so, each seem'd to want the better half of himself: --- They eat together, --- drank together; and *Beauclair*

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wou'd very fain have perswaded him to take Part of his Bed: But the other excus'd himself from that. He told him, that having been guilty of some youthful Follies, the Church had forbid him, by way of Mortification, the Ease of reposing in a Bed for a certain Time: When Morning comes, said he, I throw myself upon it, and tumble the Cloaths, to prevent the People of the House from taking Notice; but for many Nights past have rested on the Floor. *Beauclair* was himself too strict an Observer of the Orders of the Church, to press him farther; and these were the only Hours in which they were separated. Neither of them had been abroad since they came to *Paris*; and *Beauclair*, something more easy than he had been, began to think it a Piece of Ingratitude that he had not yet paid a Visit to the friendly *Friar*, by whose Instructions he had first gain'd Admittance to *Montamour*: He told *Vrayment* of it; and that he wou'd that Day pass some Hours with him. The other offer'd to accompany him, if he approv'd of it; which not being thought at all improper, they both went to the *Convent*, where they were told, the Person they enquir'd for was extremely ill, and unfit for Conversation. But *Beauclair*, whose Intimacy with him authoriz'd his Freedom, ran immediately to his Cell, leaving the *Chevalier* to divert himself in the Cloister-Walks, till his Return. But how great was his Astonishment, when after having paid his Civilities to the *Friar*, and turning his Eyes a little on one Side, he saw a Person sitting on the Bed by him, whom, in spite of the Darknes of the Place, he presently knew to be *Du Lache*! All the Rage and Violence of Passion, which by the Artifices of his agreeable Companion were a little hush'd to Peace, return'd at the Sight of this Villain: Scarce cou'd he restrain himself from sacrificing him that Moment to his Resentment. Villain! detested Monster, cry'd he, have I found thee!---- Comest thou to scatter thy abhorr'd Practices among the Saints!-- He took him by the Throat, with these Words, and dragging

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dragging him from the Bed, had his Sword half out; when the timorous Wretch, fearful to die, tho' unable to live, fell on his Knees, and begg'd him to forgive him; and the poor sick *Friar*, strangely alarm'd at what he saw and heard, cry'd out to him to forbear, and whatever his Injuries were, not to prophane that holy Place with Blood.---- This Remonstrance a little brought *Beauclair* to himself, and having begg'd his Pardon for giving him this Disturbance, he turn'd to *Du Lache*, Rise, said he, thou Unworthy of the Name of Man! ---- O Monsieur! interrupted he, (by this Time a little more assur'd,) for the Love of Heav'n do not quite undo me; ---- I am already as miserable as your Wish can make me,--- do not betray me here, and my whole *future* Life shall be spent in an Endeavour to expiate the *past*. What new Deceit, resum'd *Beauclair*, thou execrable Lyar, wou'dst thou now impose upon me? ---- Permit me but a Moment's patient hearing, answer'd the other, and I will confess all I have done; --- you shall be let into the whole Secret, which as yet it is impossible you can know without me.

Tho' there was little of Truth to be expected from this Villain, yet *Beauclair* was willing to listen to what he had to say; and perceiving he wou'd not declare himself before the *Friar*, went with him out of the Room. The Cloister-Walks were pretty full of Company, and they walk'd together into a little Field behind the Convent; where *Du Lache*, as he had promis'd, related to *Beauclair* every Particular of the Treasons he had been guilty of both to him and *Montamour*. He told him also, that the Baron *de Tortillée*, being perfectly recover'd of his Phrenzy was return'd to *Paris*, and incens'd against his Lady had taken Care to deprive her of all those Gallantries she formerly had so freely indulg'd in, by confining her to her Chamber; and that himself look'd on as a Person instrumental in her Amours, was prosecuted with his severest Resentment; and that, on that Account, and the Misfortune of some Debts, he had

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been oblig'd to abscond, and concealing his Name in that of another, take shelter in this *Convent*, where the Charity of the Fathers was all his Dependence. Tho' *Beauclair* had been before wholly assur'd of the Innocence of *Montamour*, yet he cou'd not be inform'd of the Truth of those Artifices by which he had been ensnar'd into a contrary Opinion, without lifting up his Eyes and Hands in Token of Amazement; and tho' he knew nothing of the distracting Potion which had been given to the *Baron*, his intended Murder, nor a thousand other hellish Practices, yet he stood struck dumb with Wonder that there cou'd be three such prodigious Villains in the World, as *Du Lache*, and his Confederates *Toncarr* and *Le Songe*. But while he was thus employ'd, an Accident happen'd, which more than ever inform'd him, how dangerous it was for a Man of Honour to be of the Acquaintance of such Wretches.

Full of troubled Cogitations, the unhappy *Baron* avoided as much as possible all Society: His Misfortunes were publick, and he cou'd not imagine any body look'd on him without pitying or despising that Weakness which had suffer'd him to fall into them. Chance, or his ill Genius, led him into that Field, at the very Hour, at the very Moment, that these two were in Conference. He immediately knew the Villain he so long had sought; but the Sight of *Beauclair* fill'd him with more violent Agitations: Ever since the Knowledge of his Wrongs, he had imagin'd this Gentleman was the prime Cause of them; nor was this Thought altogether opposite to Reason, considering the Manner in which he once had found him with his Wife; and now beholding him thus accompany'd, was sufficient to confirm those Conjectures.---- Now all the Injuries he had sustain'd, his violated Honour,---- his ruin'd Fortune,---- his Madness,---- his intended Murder, all at once presented themselves to his Remembrance!---- and fatally transported with Excess of Rage, he drew his Sword, and flew on the astonish'd *Beauclair*, giving him no other Warning
of

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of the Danger which he threaten'd, than that Action. It was indeed sufficient to make him stand upon his Guard ; but being desirous to know on what Account, or by whom he was so challeng'd, (for, in his present Surprise, he saw not that it was the *Baron*,) he stepp'd two or three Steps back, and was opening his Mouth to enquire the Cause of so unexpected a Salutation ; when the other, still advancing, cry'd out to him to stay ; Recoil not, base, unworthy Man ! dishonourable *Beauclair* ! said he ; but if you are not Coward too, as well as Villain, defend the Wrongs you have done me with the same Boldness as you acted them. Ha ! reply'd *Beauclair*, equally provok'd ; and who art thou who dar'st to join such Language with the Name of *Beauclair* ? --- Is it possible, (continu'd he, looking more earnestly on him,) that the *Baron de Tortillée* should so forget himself ? 'Tis thou, resum'd the impatient *Baron*, that hast forgot thy Virtue, --- debas'd the Honour of thy noble Family, --- and render'd thyself a Companion of Panders, Vagabonds, and Ruffians ! ---- But we trifle Time : --- This Woman's War of Words is not for Men, who ought to hate like us ! As much addicted to Passion as *Beauclair* naturally was, he would if possible have avoided this Combat ; but the other resolving to afford no longer Parley, press'd on him so hard, that he was oblig'd to make use of his best Skill for his Defence. *Du Lache* had all this while his Sword out too, not with a Design to prevent them from doing each other a Mischief, but to take Part with which ever was like to be the Conqueror. The *Baron*, whether it was that he was less expert, or that transported by his Fury he rush'd to eagerly on his Antagonist, is uncertain ; but *Beauclair* had the good Fortune to disarm him at the third Pass. Sufficiently satisfied with this Advantage, and rejoic'd this Adventure had terminated in no worse a Catastrophe, he was preparing to redeliver him his Sword, with all complaisant and sincere Inclinations imaginable for a thorough Reconciliation, when the

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mischievous Stander-by stab'd him in the Back with so accurs'd a Force, that the unhappy Gentleman fell with the Wound, and spoke, nor breath'd no more. Thus ended a Life, which, if not blemish'd by a too great Affection for the most Vile of Women, might have been long and happy. *Beauclair*, struck motionless with sudden Horror at a Deed so monstrous, seem'd like one transfix'd with Thunder; and before he cou'd recollect himself enough for Speech, or the Murderer cou'd determine what Way wou'd afford most Security for his Escape, they were encompassed by a Crowd of People which the Cries of the Chevalier *Vrayment* had drawn together. That young Spark having seen *Beauclair* and *Du Lache* (whom he very well knew) go hastily cross the Walks, he follow'd them into the Field, apprehensive that they were gone thither on no friendly Purpose. He observ'd their Behaviour at a Distance, till the Approach of the *Baron*; and the Manner in which he accosted *Beauclair*, made him resolve to trust nothing to Fortune, but timely Endeavour to hinder whatever Consequences either Rage and Treachery might attempt; yet fearful to leave them while he ran for Help, he bethought him of calling to some Men whom he saw cleaning the Way on the other Side of the Wall which encompassed the Field he was in. They presently resounded the Cry of Murder, which echoing from one to the other, gather'd Numbers immediately, which, tho' they had a good Way to come round, were at the Heels of *Vrayment* when he got to the fatal Scene. *Du Lache*, when they came near, was looking wildly round, as tho' distracted with the Horrors of his Guilt, his Sword lying on the Grass, died to the Hilt with Blood; *Beauclair* with both the Swords still in his Hand, his Head a little reclin'd, and stooping over the dead Body, which was fallen just at his Feet: The Sight of *Vrayment*, and the Noise of those that follow'd, rous'd him from his Lethargy, and he presently cry'd, O my Friend! behold this dreadful Object! --- Then turn your Eyes
on

on that consummate Fiend, (whom yet you know not, but by my Description,) the curs'd *Du Lache*. Before the Person to whom these Words were address'd cou'd make any Reply, a robust Fellow bawl'd out, A dreadful Murder indeed, my Masters! but 'tis hard to know which of these two, or whether both, are not guilty of it. 'Tis true, said another; therefore let us carry them both away to the Officers of Justice. Ay, ay, hollow'd out the whole Crowd, away with them both. It wou'd have been but to little purpose to have argued with the Multitude, had they endeavour'd it: But *Beauclair* was willing to go, that the murd'rous *Du Lache* might receive the due Reward of all his Crimes; nor did that Wretch seem now so timorous as might have been expected from his cowardly Disposition; he fed himself with a secret Hope, that he might be able by his Insinuations to make *Beauclair* appear at least a Party concern'd, if not a chief Instrument of the *Baron's* Death; which if he cou'd once bring to be believ'd, the Sentence must be the same on both; and then he doubted not but that Gentleman had Interest enough to procure a Pardon, which must, where the Guilt was equal, extend to one as well as the other. The *Chevalier* was not at all dissatisfied, as not doubting but the bloody Sword of *Du Lache*, and his own Evidence, who saw the Murder, wou'd be sufficient to clear *Beauclair* immediately; but he found himself mistaken. The known Amour which he had had with the Wife of the Deceas'd, and the Intimacy which had been taken Notice of between him and the Murderer, went a great way to make him appear guilty of consenting to his Death: But nothing cou'd be determin'd till the Tryal, which was order'd shou'd be in a few Days; and, in the mean Time, both were sent to Prison, neither being allow'd the Privilege of Bail.

Vrayment appear'd much more concern'd than *Beauclair* was for himself, and omitted nothing during the Time of his Confinement, which cou'd be

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expected from the most zealous Friendship: He went to all his Acquaintance, to engage them to appear in his Behalf on the Day prefix'd for the Tryal: But tho' many did, and his Character was such, as cou'd give no one leave to imagine he cou'd be guilty of a Baseness, such as he was call'd in question for, yet the *Baron's* Relations were so vigorous in their Prosecution, that in spite of all *Vrayment*, (who saw the whole Transaction,) cou'd say, the Court began to think it wou'd be very difficult to acquit him. The *Baroness* having, by *Toncarr* and *Le Songe*, been accused of a Design to murder her Husband, was also summon'd to appear; and *Du Lache* having found Means to send to her while he was in Prison, let her know the only way for their common Safety was to accuse *Beauclair*. She did it, to his Face, with an Assurance such as sure no Woman but herself cou'd ever boast; and to make her Evidence bear the greater Appearance of Truth, with counterfeited blushes, and Streams of Tears, she confess'd her criminal Affection for him had won her Consent to the *Baron's* Death, that she might give herself wholly to him. Never was any Soul alarm'd, confus'd, enrag'd, like *Beauclair*, when he heard this monstrous Allegation; scarce cou'd he contain himself in the Presence of the Judge, (who happen'd to be the Brother of *Montamour*,) from speaking to that bad Woman, when he denied what he was charg'd with, in Terms such as her Impudence deserv'd; but all that he cou'd say without being guilty of an Indecorum to Modesty, or Irreverence to the Presence he was in, he did. This Accusation; however, had a very great Influence on the Judge, who imagin'd presently that this Amour was the Occasion of his Sister's breaking with him; and the Indignity which he thought was offer'd to his Family, by preferring a Woman of the *Baroness's* Character to a Maid whose Reputation had ever been unblemish'd, heighten'd his Displeasure against the Prisoner to so great a Degree, that he was just going to pronounce him deserv'g the same Fate with *Du Lache*; when

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Vrayment, easily guessing what his Thoughts were, and distracted to find all he cou'd do to save him was in vain; And is then my Evidence, my Lord, said he, no more to be regarded? I, who was Witness to every Part of the whole Action, and know *Beauclair* as free from any Share in this Guilt, as Heaven is from Falshood; or Hell, or these his vile Accusers, from Truth. --- You speak with Passion, young *Monsieur*, reply'd the Judge, which, in a Case like this, savours too much of Partiality, to be regarded: --- You are his Friend; --- and Friendship may be byass'd. I scorn the Thought, (interrupted fiercely the enrag'd *Vrayment* :) I love *Beauclair* 'tis true; but 'tis because his Virtues challenge my Esteem: --- Did I but think he cou'd forego his Honour, and become an Accomplice with these horrid Wretches, I wou'd be the first shou'd urge your Justice to condemn him: But as I know him clear, --- clear as my own Soul, --- as yours, my Lord, or any here, from such detested Crimes, I must, I will stand up in his Vindication, tho' the whole World should censure and hate me for it. While he was uttering these Words, the Judge look'd on him with an Eye which spoke Amazement; and not replying presently, a Friend of the dead *Baron's*, one who had appear'd the most zealous of any of them in his Revenge, took this Opportunity to endeavour to weaken what this young Champion had offer'd in Defence of *Beauclair*. I hope, my Lord, said he, the Testimony of one, bold tho' he seems, so much unknown, and doubtless bought, will be of little Weight, when Circumstances so plain make void his Evidence. Injurious Man, (resum'd the little Hero,) know I was bred to hate a Lye: --- Nor shall I be unknown when he, by whose Sentence I, in my Friend, must stand or fall, shall see this Token. With these Words he pluck'd a Ring off his Finger, and presented it to the Judge; who after he had taken it, look'd carefully on it, then on him that gave it; and rising from his Seat, I am enough convinc'd, said he, and here pronounce the

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the Witness most substantial, and *Beauclair* innocent. --- Let the Court adjourn: To-morrow the other Prisoners must attend their Doom. It was to little Effect that the Friends of the Deceas'd petition'd for a further hearing. The universal Joy which appear'd in the Faces of all the disinterested Part of the Assembly, and the loud Clap which they gave when *Beauclair* was acquitted, hush'd the feeble Murmurs of the contrary Party. As the Judge pass'd by the Bar where *Beauclair* was standing, he took him by the Hand, and speaking to him in a low Voice, Dine with me to Day, said he, and be sure to bring your young Advocate with you. The other had no Time to make any other Answer to this obliging Invitation, than a low Bow; but the Surprise he was in at this sudden Change of his Affairs was such, as it wou'd be very difficult to represent. He cou'd not, however, in this publick Place, have Leisure for Reflection: He was immediately surrounded by a great Number of his Friends and Acquaintance, who came to congratulate him on being clear'd. When the Press was a little over, *Vrayment* came up to him, and with a Countenance much more grave than he had ever seen him wear, You are now safe, *Monsieur*, said he; but beware how you hereafter enter into Engagements with Persons of the *Baroness's* Humour. *Beauclair*, unwilling to hold any Discourse on an Affair which he wou'd have been glad to bury in Oblivion, answer'd these Words only with a Sigh, and a little Shaking of his Head: But after he had embrac'd and thank'd him for the Service he had done him, owning it was to him (as indeed it was) that he was indebted for his Life, he entreated him to inform him, by what Means he came to know the Judge, and what the Mystery of the Ring was, which like some Enchantment, had the Power in a Moment to unlock his Fetters, and reverse his Doom. Of that, reply'd *Vrayment*, you shall be told hereafter; but you must pardon me if I say it is a Secret, which, at present you must not be inform'd of. I will not press it then, resum'd *Beauclair*; but perhaps, at the Judge's House,

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to which he has engag'd me to bring you To-day you will be good natur'd enough to ease my Curiosity 'Tis highly possible, indeed, answer'd the *Chevalier*, that there the Riddle may be solv'd. They pass'd from this to several other Subjects of Conversation relating to the Tryal, 'till the Hour drawing near, in which they were to wait on the Judge, *Vrayment* excus'd himself from going with him, saying he had some Business another Way which he was obliged to dispatch; but when that was ended, he might expect to see him. The other entreating him not to fail, took his Leave for a much longer Time than he imagin'd.

The Judge, who waited with Impatience for their coming, receiv'd *Beauclair* with all imaginable Civility and Kindness; till finding he was alone, he a little alter'd his Countenance, and with a Voice which express'd his Discontent, What, *Monsieur*, said he, would she not come? --- or did you fear to trust her in a Brother's House? What Means, my Lord, cried the other, (more surpris'd, if possible, at these Words, than at all his late Adventures.) You counterfeit a Consternation well, resum'd the former, tho' I know not for what Cause:--- My Meaning needs, I think, no Explanation: --- You were not, as I take it, the only invited Guest. --- Most true, my Lord, answer'd *Beauclair*; and could my Perswasions have prevail'd on the *Chevalier Vrayment*, to put off to another Day a Business he had appointed on this, I had not singly waited on you. The Judge thinking himself trifled with, began to lose great Part of his Patience: You do ill, *Monsieur*, said he, to reward the kind Intentions I had for you, in this Manner:--- Why do you pretend to keep me in Ignorance of what by this Time you must be sensible I know full well? --- Why, when I demand to see my Sister, do you make an Excuse for the Absence of the *Chevalier Vrayment*? Ha! (interrupted the transported Lover, half wild 'twixt Extacy and Wonder,) what said your Lordship? --- Your Sister! --- O bless my

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my exulting Soul, and tell me all! --- Is it possible, (rejoin'd her Brother) that you should need be told by any but herself, that *Montamour* and *Vrayment* are the same? O Heavens! cried *Beauclair*, now quite o'ercome with Rapture: O all ye gracious Powers, is it possible! All that he could say was scarce sufficient to make the Judge believe his Sister could be in *Paris*, and so intimate with her Lover, and remain unknown to him, till he recounted to him his Progress to the Monastery, the Severity of her Usage to him there, and the Improbability there was, that she should have alter'd her Resolution. Neither of them knew what to think: --- That it was she, was evident, tho' her Hair and Complexion were alter'd, which might easily be perform'd by Art. The Features of her Face, her Voice, were perfectly known to her Brother; and more than all, the Ring she gave him, which was one he had put on her Finger at parting, left no room to doubt it was any other than herself; but how so wonderful a Change had happen'd, or for what Reason she had left the Monastery so disguis'd, and come in Search of the Man she had so industriously strove to avoid, was what puzzled the Capacities of them both. After some little Time of Expectation, *Beauclair* began to fear that it was in vain to hope she would make good her Promise of meeting him there, and ran home, believing he might probably find her: But how great was his Disappointment, when he was told the *Chevalier* had discharged his Lodgings, and had not given any Intimation where he design'd to go! Full of a thousand perplex'd Reflections for this second Ruin of his Hopes, he return'd to her Brother with the melancholy Account, and found him reading a Letter he had just receiv'd from her.

As soon as the Brother of *Montamour* saw him enter, You need not, *Monsieur*, said he, give yourself the Trouble of repeating our common Misfortune; the Person we both, tho' prompted by different Emotions, are so impatient to embrace, resolves we
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shall not, at least for a while, enjoy the Happiness we aim at. See here, (continu'd he, giving him the Letter,) the Intelligence I have just now received. *Beauclair* had no sooner cast his Eye upon it, than he knew the Character to be *Montamour's*, and, with a Mixture of Hope and Fear, as tho' about to unravel the Mystery of his future Fate, read o'er these Lines:

I Am sensible it is now too late, to entreat my dearest Brother to keep from *Monsieur Beauclair* the Knowledge who the Person was that endeavour'd to do him Service at his Tryal: But that I did not satisfy yours and my own Desire, in seeing you at your House, was, because I could not bear to appear in my own Shape before a Man who has affronted me in the Manner you are now no Stranger to. However, my late Behaviour may inform you I am not desirous of Revenge: --- His Repentance since has, perhaps, been Punishment sufficient, and I would not have you less willing to forgive. --- I have also a Pardon to beg for myself, for making use of your Name to countenance my Elopement from the Monastery, and conceal the Pity I had for an unworthy Lover in the Pretence of Tenderness for the best of Brathers. --- Yes, I confess, that disturb'd at some Testimonies I had of his Despair, I told the Abbess that I could not profess till I had once more bid adieu to you, and by that Means gain'd her Consent to come to Paris. Judge not too unkindly of this Deceit, but believe you are, and ever shall be, most dear to the Soul of

Your Affectionate Sister, and

Obliged Humble Servant,

MONTAMOUR.

Beauclair had scarce finish'd the reading this, when his Servant brought him another, which he told him was given him by the Chevalier *Vrayment*, with
a strict

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a strict Charge to deliver it to his Hands. The hearing that Name, and the Sight of this second Mandate increas'd the Tumults of his Soul to such a Height, that the Disorder he was in, was what nothing but itself can represent: To comprehend in any Measure what it was he felt, 'tis necessary to be possess'd of all those burning Passions, --- those distracting Whirls of torturing Thought, which scarce afforded Patience. till he could unfold the dear, and at once welcome and unwelcome Paper, which contain'd these Words:

To Monsieur BEAUCCLAIR.

THINK not, because I have given you Proofs of an unextinguish'd Tenderneſs, that I think your Penitence a ſufficient Expiation for your Crimes, nor that my Pity for your Sufferings can influence me ſo far as to make me forget what I owe to my own Honour. --- No, Beauclair! there is a Juſtice to be done one's ſelf, which if I ſhou'd diſpenſe with, you might perhaps, and indeed with much more Reason than hitherto you have had, be perſwaded to believe, I might hereafter fail in it towards you. --- What though you ſwear your Heart was ever mine, --- what though your late Repentance and Deſpair induces me to think that Proteſtation real, the World, the judging World, will never be of my Opinion. ---- My eaſy Nature, and my fond Belief, wou'd be the Feſt of every Table. --- All I can do for you, therefore, and I know not if by the Grave and Wiſe that wou'd not be thought too much, is to wiſh it were as much in my Power to reward that Tenderneſs you now have for me, as it is to pardon thoſe paſt Actions which have made us both unhappy. I cannot, without deviating from that Sincerity which has been ever the Dictator of all my Words, deny that my Love for you has ever been unſhaken; --- that it was not even in your own Power to leſſen one Grain of that exhauſtleſs Store of Paſſion you inſpir'd me,

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me with;---that it still blazes with a Flame so pure, so true, so lasting, as not Time, nor Absence, nor Unkindness can put a Damp to;--- that my whole Soul is full of you;--- and that in putting in Execution that cruel, but necessary Resolution of flying from your Sight for ever, I suffer Pangs more terrible than Death itself cou'd be: But entertain no Hope from this Confession, nor attempt to alter a Determination which is fix'd as Fate. --- Write not to me, unless you can restrain your Sentiments to such Bounds as may be fitly read by one of that Order I am going to profess myself:--- But above all Things, I conjure you, not to make use of any Stratagems for the future to distract me with the Sight of your Despair. --- The Thought of it is more than I can bear! --- Heaven! Heaven only! can enable me to support the coming killing Certainty, which takes from me all Possibility of ever being

Yours.

MONTAMOUR.

Who that has been present when Death's Icy Hand has on the sudden seiz'd on the Faculties of some one in Company, may figure to themselves what *Beauclair* was at reading this! Just so the Blood flew from his Lips and Cheeks, his Eyes grew dim, the Life and Vigour of his Air chang'd to cold Trembling, all his Limbs enervate, and down at once he sunk into the Chair he was sitting on. The Brother of *Montamour* guessing the Cause of this Disorder, took the Letter from his shaking Hand, and inform'd himself at full of what he before suspected. Come *Monsieur*, said he, recall your Courage; I see nothing in this Letter that can give you Cause of Chagrin, but rather the contrary: --- My Sister makes a Declaration here of Tenderness, much greater than I cou'd have imagin'd from her Reserve; --- and since she loves, take my Word for it, neither of you shall Despair. The dejected Lover cou'd not recover himself

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himself enough to make any other Answer to these obliging Expressions than a Sigh: But the other, continuing to assure him, in the Manner he had begun, that he wou'd not rest till he had procur'd his Happiness, made a visible Alteration in his Countenance, and by little and little, he became again the Man he was,

Nor was the Judge forgetful of what he had promis'd; but, because it was impossible to prosecute the Design he had form'd till the Affair of the Prisoners was dispatch'd, he commanded their Appearance the very next Day. The Crime of *Du Lache*, as being the immediate Murderer of the unhappy *Baron*, was too evident for any Thing to be offer'd in Opposition to his Sentence, which was to be broke upon the Wheel; *Toncarr* and *Le Songe*, having been prov'd by the Witness of the Gentleman and the Servants who rescued the *Baron*, to have assassinated and design'd his Death, receiv'd the same Doom: But the *Baroness*, though the known Contriver and Abettor of the horrid Deed, was remanded back to Prison, till he had more Leisure to consult in what Manner he shou'd decree her Punishment.

This being over, he immediately set forward with Monsieur *Beauclair* to the Monastery where *Montamour* had resolv'd to pass the Remainder of her Life. They arriv'd there the very Day before that in which she was design'd to take the Order: Her Brother found an easy Admittance to her; but not all the Arguments he cou'd alledge were of Force to engage her Consent to see *Beauclair*, till he, who had waited in an outer Room expecting to be call'd in, as the Judge had made him hope, growing impatient at this long Delay, and resolving to hear once more from *Montamour's* own Mouth his Doom, ran hastily in to them, and throwing himself at her Feet, pleaded his own Cause with such Success, that though she did not absolutely promise to grant all he ask'd, yet there appear'd a sort of consenting in her Eyes;

The Mistaken Resentment. 259

Eyes ; which her Brother observing, back'd the Intercessions of the other with Arguments so strenuous, that she was wholly at a Loss for Words to form Denials, if the Relentings of her swelling Heart wou'd have dictated them, to what her Lover and her Brother urg'd. The Abbess, whose Company on this extraordinary Occasion was desir'd, join'd her Perswasions; and had *Montamour* been less prompted from within, it had been hardly possible to have held out against such united Forces. In fine, she was at last prevail'd on to give her *Hand* to him, from whom nothing cou'd estrange her *Heart*. They were marry'd that Evening; and it wou'd be needless to endeavour, as well as impossible to set forth, as it deserv'd, the Raptures, of the o'er-joy'd *Beauclair* at so unhop'd-for a Condescension. It was not many Days between their going and coming back to *Paris* ; yet at their Return, they met the Tidings of an Act of Horror which they little expected: The wicked *Baroness*, impatient of her Fate, desperate, and, as some say, struck with Remorse, and terrified in Conscience, hopeless of Mercy here or hereafter, had swallow'd Poison, and ended her shameful Life by as ignominious a Death: The three Wretches, who had been the Instruments of her vile Actions, suffer'd the Sentence which had been given by the Judge, and with their last Breaths allow'd the Justice of it, and confess'd their Crimes. Thus was not only the *Baron's* Death reveng'd at full, but also the Disquiet which the Contrivers of it had brought on the innocent *Montamour* and her belov'd *Beauclair*. The Manner of their living together since their Marriage is such, as might be expected from that unalterable Affection which each felt for the other before, and full of that sincere Tenderness which might furnish many more Examples, were Love and Virtue the chief Inducements to *Hymen*.

F I N I S.



P O E M S

O N

SEVERAL OCCASIONS.



An Irregular ODE.

To Mr. WALTER BOWMAN, *Professor*
of the MATHEMATICKS. *Occasion'd by*
his objecting against my giving the Name of
HILARIUS to Aaron Hill Esq;



Own the Name, which to my
Muse owes Birth,

Is farbeneath the mighty Wearer's
Worth:

But say, what Means can tortur'd
Wit invent

Charms to *describe* which in *Idea* pain?

Can Reading shew a Word of such Extent,

To grasp a Glory *Thought* can scarce contain?

To

262 *Poems on several Occasions.*

To me impossible it seems;
But *thou*, alas! art far remov'd from *me* by vast
Extreams.

Unskill'd in Science, in rude Ign'rance bred:

Unhappy that I am,

(For mine is not the *Blame*;))

Learning's sweet Paths I ne'er was taught to tread:

But if such Force in well-plac'd Letters dwells,

Which can all Heaven epitomize,

Contract Immensity to narrow Space,

Wide different Beauties in one Round comprize,

And blend their Lustre in a mix'd Embrace,

Thine is the Art, great Bard! and thine the pow'rful
Spells!

Thou! who canst travel Nature's Secrets o'er,

And all Philosophy's dark Depths explore!

Thou! who to Worlds unknown canst point the
Way,

And to benighted Reason lend a Ray,

To guide the Wand'rer led too long astray!

Do *thou* exert thy oft-try'd Skill,

And what might thousand Volumes fill,

(Yet Language seem unable to discharge,))

In one all-meaning *Fiat* speak at large!

By thy inspective Power

Descry some lucky Hour,

When the sloth-shedding Sway of *Saturn* yields

To *Mercury*'s inspiring Reign,

When vigorous Planets rule the Azure Fields,

And warmly actuate Man's inventive Brain:

Study

Poems on several Occasions. 263

Study can know no nobler Aim,
Than to find out some comprehensive Name,
For him, whom to admire, is the best Plea for Fame. }

A Name it must be which implies
At once the Wonders of his Soul and Eyes:
Cherubial Sweetness ! Godlike Majesty !
Numberless Myriads of Divinities,
Which, sparkling in his Looks ! his Words ! his Works !
we see :

Harmonious let it be in Sound,
Yet with Solemnity abound ;
With Heaven-turn'd Notes adorn the nervous Sense,
Soft as his Voice ! but lofty as his Mien !
Each thrilling Syllable pleas'd Awe impart,
Which thro' the Ear may strike the Heart
With rapt'rous Tremblings, Touch the Strings of Life :
Make Extacy within itself at Strife
'Twixt Tenderness and Reverence :
To the *Mind's* Eye make every Glory seen,
And the wrapp'd Soul feel all his Force, tho' Worlds
should rush between :

But if thou seekest what Learning cannot show ;
For all in vain, I fear, is human Art
To the great Source of perfect Knowledge go :
Shake off Mortality, and on a Beam
Of tow'ring Thought, swift thro' the Æther dart !
Where blazing Galaxies of Light
Strike the aw'd Eye, and dazzle vulgar Sight :
Nor, till thou reach the Throne of the *Supreme*,
Let meaner *Veiws* retard the advent'rous Flight.

There

264 *Poems on several Occasions.*

There, MOSES, DAVID, GIDEON, and the rest
Of the immortal blest,

Who by his deathless Lays more glorious shine,
Will hail thy glad Approach in shouting Throngs,
And bid thee welcome to the Realms divine;
Both Saints and Angels forward thy Request:

(Angels are his Admirers too,
'And copy Hallelujahs from his Songs.)

Nor shall thy Wishes vainly sue,
Th' Almighty's self will smile with pleas'd Regard,
And give thy daring Genius this Reward:

Of all who Tribute paid,

Of thee it shall be said

Heaven's darling Care stands all to thee confest;
Thou know'st him most, and can'st describe him
best:

But till that Day my boastful Pride shall live;

A Pride so vast, as Empire could not give!

Far as Creation reaches, shall the Name

ELIZA chose, tune the whole Voice of Fame:

The wafting Air shall bear the Accents round,

And all the wide Expanse echo the rapt'rous Sound;

Thro' every Orb *HILARIUS* shall be heard,

And Altars to his shining Virtues rear'd.

HILARIUS there, as here, be understood

By all the Wise, the Brave, the Great, and Good,



CLIMENE's
Complaint

TO
MIRTILLO.

Translated from the FRENCH.



S injur'd *Sappho*, when by *Phaon* left
Of Joy, of Comfort, and of Peace bereft,
In tuneful Notes her wretched State be-
wail'd,

Yet nothing on the perjur'd Swain prevail'd;

N

So

266 *Poems on several Occasions.*

So I, tho' in a less harmonious Strain,
 With like Success of greater Wrongs complain.
 A far more lovely *Phaon* I have lost,
 And more than *Sappho* is *Climene* cross'd:
 Her soft'ning Muse could give her Mind Relief;
 But mine serves only to encrease my Grief:
 My Thoughts confus'd, to wild Distraction bend,
 And different Passions in my Breast contend.
 The Violence of both too well I prove,
 Restrain'd by *Honour*, and push'd on by *Love*:
Pride bids me your Indifference disdain,
 But *Love* prevails to call you back again;
 Since to submit, 'tis then so hard a Task,
 Ah! let me not, *Mirtillo*, vainly ask:
 Return, return, my faithless Dear, return!
 No longer let the poor *Climene* mourn!
Climene! who for thee the World despis'd;
Climene! once by thee so justly priz'd!
 How often on some fragrant Bank we've sat,
 By shady Trees defended from the Heat?
 No Ornament th' adjacent Meads could wear;
 You stripp'd their Beauties to adorn my Hair:
 Nor was your Kindness ill by me repaid,
 I wove 'em into Chaplets for your Head:
 Tir'd with this innocent Felicity,
 Business you feign; but did you love like me,
 I should your most important Business be!
 Chang'd is your Mind since *Paris's* Choice you prais'd,
 Who, by the Hope of Love and Beauty rais'd,

Adjudg'd

Poems on several Occasions. 267

Adjudg'd the long-contested golden Prize,
Alone was due to *Venus*' conquering Eyes.
Juno would now the envy'd Preference claim,
And *Love* bethought an empty airy Name.
For Greatness you forsake the shady Grove,
And to the loud tumultuous Town remove;
Unjust, unkind *Mirtillo*! --- But, no more:
Complaints are fruitless, vainly I implore;
More deaf than Seas or Winds to my Request,
And more impregnable than Rocks thy Breast.
When *Theseus* *Ariadne* had betray'd,
She was in Heaven a Constellation made:
Snatch'd by th' indulgent God from Earth to Skies,
Her perjur'd Lover's Scorn she now defies.
Ah! why will not some pitying Power bestow
Compassion on the lost *Climene*'s Woe?
Not to be great your Favour I implore;
Annihilate my Soul, I ask no more.





Translated from the FRENCH.



COULD my faint Verse but copy what
I feel;
But half the Pangs of my rack'd Soul
reveal;

Thy generous Heart would pity my Distress,
And ease that Anguish which I can't express.
For, Oh! 'tis only in thy Pow'r t'appase
My warring Thoughts, and bid my Tumults cease.

BUT first reflect (thou God of my Desires)
What sort of Passion, worth like thine inspires;
Think what a vast Profusion of Delight
My wondrous Love, thy wondrous Charms excite!
By thy own Merits, thou my Zeal may'st prove,
And by th' almighty Causes judge my Love:
Both are so vast, so far surpassing all,
That perfect, great, or excellent we call,
Each stands alone a bright Original!

YET still thus blest with more than mortal Joys,
Prophetick Fears my Happiness destroys!

Strange

Poems on several Occasions. 269

Strange Shiverings run thro' every vital Part,
And a dead Damp o'erspreads my trembling Heart!
Alarm'd Desire, even in your Arms is chill'd,
As early Blossoms by rough Blasts are kill'd!
Cold Apprehension midst of Rapture steals,
And Heaven and Hell at once my Bosom feels!

NOR are these Omens vain; a Day will come
When Love no more shall in your Thoughts have
Room.

When tir'd, Desire shall to Remorse give way,
And cool Reflection to your View display
All my Demerits, and my Faults betray:
When I abandon'd and despis'd must fly
To some dark Shade, and there forgotten lie,
Till Fate in Pity gives me leave to die.
Nor dare to upbraid your too, too just Disdain;
But only on penurious Heaven complain!
In humble Grief, my Want of Charms deplore;
But lift my Eyes to Hope and you no more!

IF therefore, ought be true that you pretend,
If with the Lover you avow the Friend;
Forbear to urge my Wishes to their Height,
Lest sudden Woe o'ertake the daring Flight,
And down, at once, I sink in endless Night.
No farther let me tread the glittering Maze,
But at becoming Distance humbly gaze;
Adore the Glories of your god-like Soul,
And all the Softness of my own controul.

270 *Poems on several Occasions.*

Chear'd with your Sight, wish no superior Bliss,
And all the Train of fond Desires dismiss;
But, Oh! too far my heedless Love has stray'd,
Too much the Dictates of Desire obey'd;
And I, perhaps, by Reason's Jury cast,
In vain ask Mercy when my Doom is past.



Translated



Translated from the FRENCH.



W E A R Y, detesting all Society,
Since shunn'd by him I only wish'd to see,
I fly the chearlets Sight of human Kind,
Seek Solitude befitting my sad Mind:

Where unalarm'd, and free
From Insults and from Flattery,
Sense in a Lethargy of Thought,
Might be dissolv'd, T I M O R I O N forgot,
And future Time glide on, unfelt, in blest Stupidity.

B U T, when to unfrequented Wilds I run,
Or hide me in some day-defying Gloom,
Where the bright Lamp of Heav'n ne'er shone,

And Night seems ever but begun!
Cruel Remembrance persecutes me still,
And disappoints my Will;
Shews what I *was*, with what I'm now become
And racks my Brain with curs'd Comparison.

W H A T shall I do? Alas! I strive in vain;
Long-lost Repose I *never* must regain:

272 *Paems on several Occasions.*

Where'er I go, TIMOLION is there!
 Even Darkneſs cannot hide him from my Sight,
 His fatal Beams dart thro' the Veil of Night,
 To my Soul's Eye his Glories all appear,
 And wake Reflection with too glaring Light!
 The ſleeping Paſſions at the quick'ning Blaze
 Start to new Life, and hoſtile Vigour gain.
 All Foes alike to Reaſon's Sway,
 Each his whole Force diſplays
 To torture or betray,
 With *Shews* of Pleaſure, or with *real* Pain.

HOPE, flatt'ring Paraſite, is always near,
 Oppos'd to him ſtands Tyrant Fear,
 Both have enough to ſay, and both by Turns engroſs
 (my Ear.

Long they ſtruggle, but in vain,
 Deſpotick Rule to gain:
 Their Strength is equal, my divided Soul
 Yields now to *this*, and then to *that* Controul;
 And whiſt of neither diſpoſſeſt,
 Both with convulſive Fury rend my bleeding Breaſt.
 Thought warring againſt Thought, like meeting
 (Tides,
 Daſh o'er each other with tumultuous Force,
 O'erwhelming all within their rapid Courſe,
 All rage at once, all conquer, and yet none ſubſides.

My

Poems on several Occasions. 273

My Mind a Chaos of Confusion seems,
Doubt-kill'd Expectance, soon as born, expires,
Ten thousand Horrors the short Joy succeed,
And each new Thought does a new Fury breed;
Wild and abortive Schemes!

Despair-check'd Wishes, and untam'd Desires,
Numberless, nameless, Contradictions rise,
Driving, in Storms, my scatter'd Sense about;
Determination her fought Aid denies,
And Madness reigns throughout!

So, when o'er Buildings fir'd, a Whirlwind rides,
And e'ery way th' excentrick Flame divides,
Some, snatch'd aloft, in blazing Volumes fly,
And paint with dreadful Radiance all the Sky;
While others downward hurl'd,
At first devour the humble Dust, and crawl along
(the Ground,
Till at their Lot enrag'd, they gather round,
And spread vast Ruin thro' th' affrighted World.



T H E



THE VISION.



S. I this Morn, neglecting coming Day,
In the dull God's Embrace supinely lay;
My nobler Part, scorning to be confin'd,
Did upwards soar, and left my Earth
behind:

Thro' the Ætherial Regions swiftly flew,
Past interposing Clouds which barr'd my View.
Methought, with stedfast and undazzled Eyes
I took in all the Glory of the Skies;
Beheld the rolling Orbs in order move,
And in their Symmetry prov'd the Art of *Jove*.

BUT long I could not in that Prospect stay,
My hurry'ng Fancy made me farther stray,
To those bright Plains where, in superior State,
The high-thron'd Sons of Wit illustrious sat:
Each had their Works in shining Cases plac'd,
With Stars adorn'd, more by their Titles grac'd.

These

Poems on several Occasions. 275

These seem'd the genuine Product of their Art;
Which to th' Unlearn'd no Profit could impart:
But what amaz'd me most, vast Heaps I spy'd
Of Books, (the same Inscriptions beautify'd,)
With Pages torn, and Leaves disorder'd, lie
Like useless Lumber, thrown neglected by.
With eager Haste the nearest Lines I snatch'd,
But e'er my Purpose fully was dispatch'd,
The awfull'st Form which grac'd the Laureat Sect,
Did in these Words my erring Search direct:

I N vain thou here wouldst *Ovid's* Softness find,
Or trace the Majesty of *Homer's* Mind:
Our forceful Fire, in faint Translation lost,
Can little of its native Vigour boast:
Wouldst thou behold us as at first we were,
Back to the nether World again repair;
There thou thy wonder-searching Soul mayst fill
With due contemplating *Hillarius's* Skill;
In him our diff'rent Beauties center'd, shine
With congregated Pow'r, and Blaze divine:
Our Muses now attend on him alone,
Join'd with a brighter, greater of his own.
Had former Times been, like the present, blest,
Low Adorations had their Joy confess'd;
Each Path to *Delphos* had been left untrod,
His star-like Fame had pointed out the God!
And happy *Britain*, proud of such a Birth,
Receiv'd the loaded Tribute of the Earth.

276 *Poems on several Occasions.*

Go then, his matchless Works with Care read o'er,
 Just Admiration will enflame thee more,
 Than vain Desires of Knowledge could before!
 If any Spark of true poetick Fire,
 Does thy dull Breast, with gen'rous Warmth inspire
 That Theme will call it forth, and teach thee, how
 More able Pens their Gratitude should show
 For abdicated Wit, so long deplor'd,
 Now, by his Genius, to the World restor'd!

Thus spoke the *Bard*, and all the Bays-wreath'd Tribe
 In Shouts of Joy, did pleas'd Assent ascribe!
 Then swift, as shooting Stars, the Phantoms fled,
 And I, that Moment, found my self in Bed.

BUT, Oh! when Soul and Body were rejoin'd,
 What various Transports fir'd my anxious Mind?
 Not mov'd with Wonder at so strange a Dream,
 (My waking Thoughts can find no other Theme,)
 But struck with conscious Guilt, with Shame oppress'd,
 I curs'd my backward Muse, which charm'd and blest'd,
 With unhop'd Favours had no Thanks express'd.
 In vain I rag'd, vainly did Efforts make,
 My grateful Meaning, or his Worth to speak!
 Amazing Excellence! what Words can paint?
 To describe Lightning, Colours are too faint:
 The vast Idea overswell'd my Thought,
 And all my Senses to Confusion brought.

Poems on several Occasions. 277

As those whose Opticks ne'er were blest'd with
Sight,
But from their Birth condemn'd to darksome Night;
By Miracle, at last, their Eyes unseal'd,
And the bright Glories of the Sun reveal'd;
With sudden Transport start, with Rapture gaze,
Their new-born Sense, half lost in wild Amaze!
So I, who but some Glimmerings had seen,
Some little Sketches, of Wit's glorious Scene,
With instant Rush, all Heaven at once disclos'd,
Such beamy Brightness, 'gainst weak Sense oppos'd:
Shot Rays too fierce, too poynant to sustain,
And, ev'n to Madness work'd my aking Brain!
Aw'd! charm'd! and dazled! cool Reflections shun;
My staggering Reason, into Flights I run!
With incoherent Extasies am fir'd,
Such, as of old, the *Bacchanals* inspir'd!
What can the Medium in my Soul restore?
What give the Calmness I enjoy'd before?
Vain Hope, Nature must change in him or me!
I grow less sensible, or less glorious he!
E'er past Tranquillity again can be!





T O
HILLARIUS,

O N
His sending some V E R S E S,
sign'd M. S.



N vain a borrow'd Name, shrowds
Light divine!
Nothing from me can be conceal'd
that's thine!
What tho' each Character wore deep
Disguise,
Such as might cheat the most discerning Eyes;
My Soul acknowledg'd the magnetick Call,
And cry'd, in Transport, 'Tis *Hillarius* all!

B U T what, thou great Inspirer, cou'd attone,
If Sense deceiv'd, I had some Outrage done?
If sacrilegiously with Scorn possess'd,
I'd torn the Paper, which thy Hands have bless'd?
For who, approv'd by thee, can stoop to take
The little Praises that the Vulgar make?

T O



T O
D I A N A,
O N

Her asking me how I lik'd a fine
Poem of Mr. HILL's.



HY, Cruel! lov'st thou to torment thy
Friend!

Say, to what Aim, does this strange
Question tend?

How much I like! admir'd! ador'd!
thou saw'st,

When in Amazement every Sense was lost!

If meanly pleas'd, we may express Delight,
For moderate Themes, will moderate Joys excite:
But, Oh! when fir'd with Extasy too great,
Transport-shook Reason quits its tott'ring Seat;
The fault'ring Tongue the Use of Speech denies,
And Thought itself in Height of Rapture dies!

The

280 *Poems on several Occasions.*

THE great Saint *Paul*, peculiarly grac'd,
Who all the shining Tracts of Glory trac'd;
At his Return cou'd no Description raise;
Heaven and *Hillarius* are above all Praise!
All other Wonders lose their Name when known,
But He, the more explor'd, is brighter shown!
At every View, new Rays of Excellence
Dart from his Store, and strike our starting Sense!

Read thou with Care, each Soul-extracting Line,
With what a Force the vary'd Glories shine!
Mark how his Thunders roar, his Lightnings flash!
See! th' encountring Billows, how they dash!
Observe the glitt'ring Legions by him led,
Whose God-like Aim their Influence wou'd spread,
Virtue to re-instate, and strike Oppression dead!
Then think, alas! thou wilt not have the Pow'r, but lie
Like me, lost and o'er-whelm'd in Seas of Extasy.

F I N I S.

10 JUL 68



